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OF

HORACE WALPOLE

WITH

GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

HON. H. S. CONWAY.

REV. W. COLE.

LADY HERVEY.

RICHARD WEST, Esq.

GRAY, the Poet.

COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

REV. MR. BIRCH.

HON. G. HARDINGE.

EARL OF STRAFORD.

JOHN CHUTE, Esq.

DAVID HUME, Esq.

LADY CRAVEN.

REV. W. MASON.

MRS. HANNAH MORE, &c.

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CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

To GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Arlington-street, March 31, 1770.

I SHALL be extremely obliged to you for alderman Backwell. A scarce print is a real present to me, who have a table of weights and measures in my head very different from that of the rich and covetous.

I am glad your journey was prosperous. The weather here has continued very sharp, but it has been making preparations for April to-day, and watered the streets with some soft showers. They will send me to Strawberry to-morrow, where I hope to find the lilacs beginning to put forth their little noses. Mr. Chute mends very slowly, but you know he has as much patience as gout.

I depend upon seeing you whenever you return this wayward. You will find the round chamber far advanced, though not finished, for my undertakings do not stride with the impetuosity of my youth. This single room has been half as long in completing as all the rest of the castle. My compliments to Mr. John, whom I hope to see at the same time.

Yours ever.

To GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Strawberry-hill, May 6, 1770.

IF you are like me, you are fretting at the weather. We have not a leaf, yet, large enough to make an apron for a Miss Eve at two years old. Flowers and fruits, if they come at all this year, must meet together as they do in a Dutch picture; our lords and ladies, however, couple as if it were the real *Gioventu dell'anno*. Lord Albemarle,¹ you know, has disappointed all his brothers and my niece; and lord Fitzwilliam is delared *sposo* to lady Charlotte Ponsonby.² It is a pretty match, and makes lord Besborough as happy as possible.

Masquerades proceed in spite of church and king. The bishop of London persuaded that good soul the archbishop to remonstrate against them, but happily the age prefers silly follies to serious ones, and dominos, *comme de raison*, carry it against lawn sleeves.

There is a new institution that begins to make, and if it proceeds, will make a considerable noise. It is a club of both sexes to be erected at Almack's, on the mode of that of the men of White's. Mrs. Fitzroy, lady Pembroke, Mrs. Meynel, lady Molyneux, miss Pelham, and miss Loyd, are the foundresses. I am ashamed to say I am of so young and fashionable a society; but as they are people I live with, I choose to be idle rather than morose. I can go to a young supper, without forgetting how much sand is run out of the hour-glass. Yet I shall never pass a

¹ George third earl of Albemarle. His lordship had been aide-de-camp to the duke of Cumberland at Fontenoy, and in the following year was selected by his royal highness to be the bearer of the news of the victory of Culloden. He was commander-in-chief at the reduction of the Havannah, and thereby increased both his reputation and his fortune. Walpole is alluding to his having married; which he did on the 20th April 1770, Anne, youngest daughter of Sir John Miller, bart., of Chichester in the county of Sussex. He died 13th Oct. 1772, and was succeeded by his only son the present viscount. His countess survived him until 3d July 1824. [Ed.]

² Lady Charlotte Ponsonby, second daughter of William, second earl of Besborough. The marriage took place 1st July 1770. Her ladyship died 13th May 1822; the only issue of her marriage being the present earl Fitzwilliam, who succeeded, 8th Feb. 1833, to the earldom, which his father had enjoyed for nearly seventy-seven years. [Ed.]

triste old age in turning the psalms into Latin or English verse. My plan is to pass away calmly ; cheerfully if I can ; sometimes to amuse myself with the rising generation, but to take care not to fatigue them, nor weary them with old stories, which will not interest them, as their adventures do not interest me. Age would indulge prejudices if it did not sometimes polish itself against younger acquaintance ; but it must be the work of folly if one hopes to contract friendship with them, or desires it, or thinks one can become the same follies, or expects that they should do more than bear one for one's good-humour. In short, they are a pleasant medicine, that one should take care not too grow fond of. Medicines hurt when habit has annihilated their force ; but you see I am in no danger. I intend by degrees to decrease my opium, instead of augmenting the dose. Good night ; you see I never let our long-lived friendship drop, though you give it so few opportunities of breathing.

Yours ever.

TO GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Strawberry-hill, June 11, 1770.

My company and I have wished for you very much to-day. The duchess of Portland, Mrs. Delany, Mr. Bateman, and your cousin, Fred. Montagu, dined here. Lord Guildford was very obliging, and would have come if he dared have ventured. Mrs. Montagu was at Bill-hill with lady Gower. The day was tolerable, with sun enough for the house, though not for the garden. You, I suppose, will never come again, as I have not a team of horses large enough to draw you out of the clay of Oxfordshire.

I went yesterday to see my niece¹ in her new principality of Ham. It delighted me and made me peevish. Close to the Thames, in the centre of all rich and verdant beauty, it is so blocked up and barricaded with walls, vast trees, and gates, that you think yourself an hundred miles off and an hundred years back. The old furniture is so manificently ancient, dreary, and decayed,* that at every step one's spirits sink, and all my passion

¹ Charlotte, daughter of Sir E. Walpole, and sister of the duchess of Gloucester, married to Lord Huntingtower, who had just succeeded to the title of the earl of Dysart, by the death of his father. [Ed.]

for antiquity could not keep them up. Every minute I expected to see ghosts sweeping by; ghosts I would not give sixpence to see, Lauderdales, Tollemaches, and Maitlands. There is one old brown gallery full of Vandycks and Lelys, charming miniatures, delightful Wouvermans, and Polenburghs, china, japan, bronzes, ivory cabinets, and silver dogs, pokers, bellows, &c. without end. One pair of bellows is of filigree. In this state of pomp and tatters my nephew intends it shall remain, and is so religious an observer of the venerable rites of his house, that because the gates never were opened by his father but once for the late lord Granville, you are locked out and locked in, and after journeying all round the house, as you do round an old French fortified town, you are at last admitted through the stable-yard to creep along a dark passage by the housekeeper's room, and so by a back door into the great hall.² He seems as much afraid of water as a cat; for though you might enjoy the Thames from every window of three sides of the house, you may tumble into it before you guess it is there. In short, our ancestors had so little idea of taste and beauty, that I should not have been surprised if they had hung their pictures with the painted sides to the wall. Think of such a palace commanding all the reach of Richmond and Twickenham, with a domain from the foot of Richmond-hill to Kingston-bridge, and then imagine its being as dismal and prospectless as if it stood

On Stanmore's wintry wild!

I don't see why a man should not be divorced from his prospect as well as from his wife, for not being able to enjoy it. Lady Dysart frets, but it is not the etiquette of the family to yield, and so she must content herself with her chateau of Tonderten-tronk as well as she can. She has another such ample prison in Suffolk, and may be glad to reside where she is. Strawberry, with all its painted glass and gloom, looked as gay when I came home as Mrs. Cornelis's ball-room.

I am very busy about the last volume of my Painters, but have lost my index, and am forced again to turn over all my Vertues, forty volumes of miniature MSS.; so that this will be the third

² There is a tradition, that the celebrated Cabal administration used to hold its meetings at Ham House. The family library, which remains intact, is said to be one of the richest in black letter literature in the country. [Ed.]

time I shall have made an index to them. Don't say I am not persevering, and yet I thought I was grown idle. What pains one takes to be forgotten ! Good night. Yours ever.

TO GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Strawberry-hill, June 29, 1770.

SINCE the sharp mountain will not come to the little hill, the little hill must go to the mountain. In short, what do you think of seeing me walk into your parlour a few hours after this epistle ! I had not time to notify myself sooner. The case is, princess Amelia has insisted on my going with her to, that is, meeting her at, Stowe on Monday, for a week. She mentioned it to me some time ago, and I thought I had parried it ; but having been with her at Park-place these two or three days, she has commanded it so positively, that I could not refuse. Now, as it would be extremely inconvenient to my indolence to be dressed up in weepers and hatbands by six o'clock in the morning, and lest I should be taken for chief mourner going to Beckford's funeral,¹ I trust you will be charitable enough to give me a bed at Adderbury for one night, whence I can arrive at Stowe in a decent time, and caparisoned as I ought to be, when I have lost a brother-in-law,² and am to meet a princess. Don't take me for a Lausun, and think all this favour portends a *second* marriage between our family and the blood-royal ; nor that my visit to Stowe implies my espousing Miss Wilkes. I think I shall die as I am, neither higher nor lower ; and above all things, no more politics. Yet I shall have many a private smile to myself, as I wander among all those consecrated and desecrated buildings, and think what company I am in, and of all that is

¹ William Beckford, Esq., Lord Mayor of London, who died in the course of his second mayoralty, the 21st June 1770, in the sixty-fifth year of his age. His statue, on the pedestal of which is recorded the celebrated speech which he addressed to George the Third, in vindication of the people's right to remonstrate to the throne, still decorates Guildhall. The distinguished author of *Vathek*, formerly the proprietor of Fonthill, is his son. [Ed.]

² George third earl of Cholmondeley, died 1770. He married, 14th Sept. 1723, Mary, youngest daughter of sir Robert Walpole, first earl of Orford. [Ed.]

past ; but I must shorten my letter, or you will not have finished it when I arrive. Adieu ! Yours, a coming ! a coming !

TO GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq,

Adderbury, Sunday night, July 1, 1770.

You will be enough surprised to receive a letter from me dated from your own house, and may judge of my mortification at not finding you here ; exactly as it happened two years ago. In short, here I am, and will tell you how I came here ; in truth, not a little against my will. I have been at Park-place with princess Amelia, and she insisted on my meeting her at Stowe to-morrow. She had mentioned it before, and as I have no delight in a royal progress, and as little in the seigneur Temple, I waved the honour and pleasure, and thought I should hear no more of it. However, the proposal was turned into a command, and every body told me I could not refuse. Well, I could not come so near, and not call upon you ; besides, it is extremely *convenient to my lord Castlecomer*, for it would have been horrid to set out at seven o'clock in the morning, full dressed in my weepers, and to step out of my chaise into a drawing-room. I wrote to you on Friday, the soonest I could after this was settled, to notify myself to you, but find I am arrived before my letter. Mrs. White is all goodness ; and being the first of July, and consequently the middle of winter, has given me a good fire and some excellent coffee and bread and butter, and I am as comfortable as possible, except in having missed you. She insists on acquainting you, which makes me write this to prevent your coming ; for as I must depart at twelve o'clock to-morrow, it would be dragging you home before your time for only half an hour, and I have too much regard for lord Guildford to deprive him of your company. Don't therefore think of making this unnecessary compliment. I have treated your house like an inn, and it will not be friendly, if you do not make as free with me. I had much rather that you would take it for a visit that you ought to repay. Make my best compliments to your brother and lord Guildford, and pity me for the six dreadful days I am going to pass. Rosette is fast asleep in your chair, or I am sure she

would write a postscript. I cannot say she is either commanded or invited to be of this royal party ; but have me, have my dog.

I must not forget to thank you for mentioning Mrs. Wetenhall, on whom I should certainly wait with great pleasure, but have no manner of intention of going into Cheshire. There is not a chair or stool in Cholmondeley, and my nephew, I believe, will pull it down. He has not a fortune to furnish or inhabit it ; and if his uncle should leave him one he would choose a pleasanter country. Adieu ! Don't be formal with me, and don't trouble your hand about

Yours ever.

To GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Strawberry-hill, Saturday night, July 7, 1770.

AFTER making an inn of your house, it is but decent to thank you for my entertainment, and to acquaint you with the result of my journey. The party passed off much better than I expected. A princess at the head of a very small set for five days together did not promise well. However, she was very good-humoured, and easy, and dispensed with a large quantity of etiquette. Lady Temple is good-nature itself, my lord was very civil, lord Besborough is made to suit all sorts of people, lady Mary Coke respects royalty too much not to be very condescending, lady Anne Howard¹ and Mrs. Middleton filled up the drawing-room, or rather made it out, and I was so determined to carry it off as well as I could, and happened to be in such good spirits, and took such care to avoid politics, that we laughed a great deal, and had not one cloud the whole time.

We breakfasted at half an hour after nine ; but the princess did not appear till it was finished ; then we walked in the garden, or drove about in cabriolets, till it was time to dress ; dined at three, which, though properly proportioned to the smallness of company to avoid ostentation, lasted a vast while, as the princess eats and talks a great deal ; then again into the garden till past seven, when we came in, drank tea and coffee, and played at pharaoh till ten, when the princess retired, and we went to supper,

¹ Lady Anne Howard, daughter of Henry, fourth earl, and sister of Frederick fifth earl of Carlisle. [Ed.]

and before twelve to bed. You see, there was great sameness and little vivacity in all this. It was a little broken by fishing, and going round the park one of the mornings; but, in reality, the number of buildings and variety of scenes in the garden, made each day different from the rest, and my meditations on so historic a spot prevented my being tired.² Every acre brings to one's mind some instance of the parts or pedantry, of the taste or want of taste, of the ambition, or love of fame, or greatness, or miscarriages of those that have inhabited, decorated, planned, or visited the place. Pope, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Kent, Gibbs, lord Cobham, lord Chesterfield, the mob of nephews, the Lytteltons, Granvilles, Wests, Leonidas Glover, and Wilkes, the late prince of Wales, the king of Denmark, princess Amelia, and the proud monuments of lord Chatham's services, now enshrined there, then anathematized there, and now again commanding there, with the temple of friendship, like the temple of Janus, sometimes open to war, and sometimes shut up in factious cabals—all these images crowd upon one's memory, and add visionary personages to the charming scenes, that are so enriched with fanes and temples, that the real prospects are little less than visions themselves.

On Wednesday night, a small Vauxhall was acted for us at the grotto in the Elysian fields, which was illuminated with lamps, as were the thicket and two little barks on the lake. With a little exaggeration I could make you believe that nothing was so delightful. The idea was really pretty, but, as my feelings have lost something of their romantic sensibility, I did not quite enjoy such an entertainment *al fresco* so much as I should have done twenty years ago. The evening was more than cool, and the destined spot any thing but dry. There were not half lamps enough, and no music but an ancient militia-man, who played cruelly on a squeaking tabor and pipe. As our procession descended the vast flight of steps into the garden, in which was assembled a crowd of people from Buckingham and the neighbouring villages to see the princess and the show, the moon shining very bright, I could not help laughing as I surveyed

¹ A tolerably exact description of Stowe, as it was when Walpole wrote this account, will be found in vol. ii. p. 218—231, of a little work in four volumes, published between 1760—1770, called "A Tour thro' Great Britain," &c. [Ed.]

our troop, which, instead of tripping lightly to such an Arcadian entertainment, were hobbling down by the balustrades, wrapped up in cloaks and great-coats, for fear of catching cold. The earl, you know, is bent double, the countess very lame; I am a miserable walker, and the princess, though as strong as a Brunswick lion, makes no figure in going down fifty stone stairs. Except lady Anne, and by courtesy lady Mary, we were none of us young enough for a pastoral. We supped in the grotto, which is as proper to this climate as a sea-coal fire would be in the dog-days at Tivoli.

But the chief entertainment of the week, at least what was so to the princess, was an arch, which lord Temple has erected to her honour in the most enchanting of all picturesque scenes. It is inscribed on one side, ‘Amelia Sophia Aug.,’ and has a medallion of her on the other. It is placed on an eminence at the top of the Elysian fields, in a grove of orange-trees. You come to it on a sudden, and are startled with delight on looking through it: you at once see, through a glade, the river winding at bottom; from which a thicket arises, arched over with trees, but opened, and discovering a hillock full of hay-cocks, beyond which in front is the Palladian bridge, and again over that a larger hill crowned with the castle. It is a tall landscape framed by the arch and the overbowering trees, and comprehending more beauties of light, shade, and buildings, than any picture of Albano I ever saw.

Between the flattery and the prospect the princess was really in Elysium: she visited her arch four or five times every day, and could not satiate herself with it. The statues of Apollo and the muses stand on each side of the arch. One day she found in Apollo’s hand the following lines, which I had written for her, and communicated to lord Temple:

T’other day, with a beautiful frown on her brow,
To the rest of the gods said the Venus of Stowe,
What a fuss is here made with that arch just erected,
How *our* temples are slighted, our altars neglected!
Since yon nymph has appear’d, *we* are notic’d no more,
All resort to *her* shrine, all *her* presence adore;
‘And what’s more provoking, before all our faces,
Temple thither has drawn both the muses and graces.
Keep your temper, dear child, Phœbus cried with a smile,
Nor this happy, this amiable festival spoil.

Can your shrine any longer with garlands be dress'd?
 When a true goddess reigns, all the false are suppress'd.

If you will keep my counsel, I will own to you, that originally the two last lines were much better, but I was forced to alter them out of decorum, not to be too pagan upon the occasion; in short, here they are as in the first sketch,—

Recollect, once before that our oracle ceased,
 When a real divinity rose in the east.

So many heathen temples around had made me talk as a Roman poet would have done: but I corrected my verses, and have made them insipid enough to offend nobody. Good night! I am rejoiced to be once more in the gay solitude of my own little Tempe.

Yours ever.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, July 9, 1770.

I AM not going to tell you, my dear lord, of the diversions or honours of Stowe, which I conclude lady Mary has writ to lady Strafford. Though the week passed cheerfully enough, it was more glory than I should have sought of my own head. The journeys to Stowe and Park-place have deranged my projects so, that I don't know where I am, and I wish they have not given me the gout into the bargain; for I am come back very lame, and not at all with the bloom that one ought to have imported from the Elysian-field. Such jaunts when one is growing old is playing with edged-tools, as my lord Chesterfield, in one of his Worlds, makes the husband say to his wife, when she pretends that gray powder does not become her. It is charming at twenty to play at Elysian-fields, but it is no joke at fifty; or too great a joke. It made me laugh as we were descending the great flight of steps from the house to go and sup in the grotto on the banks of Helicon: we were so cloaked up, for the evening was very cold, and so many of us were limping and hobbling, that Charon would have easily believed we were going to ferry over in earnest. It is with much more comfort that I am writing to your lordship in the great bow-window of my new round room, which collects

all the rays of the south-west sun, and composes a sort of summer; a feel I have not known this year, except last Thursday. If the rains should ever cease, and the weather settle to fine, I shall pay you my visit at Wentworth-castle; but hitherto the damps have affected me so much, that I am more disposed to return to London and light my fire, than brave the humours of a climate so capricious and uncertain, in the country. I cannot help thinking it grows worse; I certainly remember such a thing as dust: nay, I still have a clear idea of it, though I have seen none for some years, and should put some grains in a bottle for a curiosity, if it should ever fly again.

News I know none. You may be sure it was a subject carefully avoided at Stowe; and Beckford's death had not raised the glass or spirits of the master of the house. The papers make one sick with talking of that noisy vapouring fool, as they would of Algernon Sidney.

I have not happened to see your future nephew, though we have exchanged visits. It was the first time I had been at Marble-hill, since poor lady Suffolk's death; and the impression was so uneasy, that I was not sorry not to find him at home. Adieu, my good lord! Except seeing you both, nothing can be more agreeable than to hear of yours and lady Strafford's health, who, I hope, continues perfectly well.

Your most faithful humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, July 12, 1770.

REPOSING under my laurels! No, no, I am reposing in a much better tent, under the tester of my own bed. I am not obliged to rise by break of day and be dressed for the drawing-room; I may saunter in my slippers till dinner-time, and not make bows till my back is as much out of joint as my lord Temple's. In short, I should die of the gout or fatigue, if I was to be Polignus to a princess for another week. Twice a-day we made a pilgrimage to almost every heathen temple in that province that they call a garden; and there is no sallying out of the house without descending a flight of steps as high as St.

Paul's. My lord Besborough would have dragged me up to the top of the column, to see all the kingdoms of the earth ; but I would not, if he could have given them to me. To crown all, because we live under the line, and that we were all of us giddy young creatures, of near threescore, we supped in a grotto in the Elysian fields, and were refreshed with rivers of dew and gentle showers that dripped from all the trees ; and put us in mind of the heroic ages, when kings and queens were shepherds and shepherdesses, and lived in caves, and were wet to the skin two or three times a-day: Well ! thank heaven, I am emerged from that Elysium, and once more in a Christian country !—Not but, to say the truth, our pagan landlord and landlady were very obliging, and the party went off much better than I expected. We had no very recent politics, though volumes about the Spanish war ; and as I took care to give every thing a ludicrous turn as much as I could, the princess was diverted, the six days rolled away, and the seventh is my sabbath ; and I promise you I will do no manner of work, I, nor my cat, nor my dog, nor any thing that is mine. For this reason, I entreat that the journey to Goodwood may not take place before the 12th of August, when I will attend you. But this expedition to Stowe has quite blown up my intended one to Wentworth-castle: I have not resolution enough left for such a journey. Will you and lady Ailesbury come to Strawberry before, or after Goodwood? I know you like being dragged from home as little as I do ; therefore you shall place that visit just when it is most convenient to you.

I came to town the night before last, and am just returning. There are not twenty people in all London. Are not you in despair about the summer? It is horrid to be ruined in coals in June and July. Adieu !

Yours ever.

To GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Strawberry-hill, July 14, 1770.

I SEE by the papers this morning that Mr. Jenkinson is dead. He had the reversion of my place, which would go away,

if I should lose my brother. I have no pretensions to ask it, and you know it has long been my fixed resolution not to accept it. But as lord North is your particular friend, I think it right to tell you, that you may let him know what it is worth, that he may give it to one of his own sons, and not bestow it on somebody else, without being apprized of its value. I have seldom received less than fourteen hundred a-year in money, and my brother, I think, has four more from it. There are besides many places in the gift of the office, and one or two very considerable. Do not mention this but to lord North, or lord Guildford. It is unnecessary, I am sure, for me to say to you, but I would wish them to be assured that in saying this, I am incapable of, and above any finesse, or view, to myself. I refused the reversion for myself several years ago, when lord Holland was secretary of state, and offered to obtain it for me. Lord Bute, I believe, would have been very glad to have given it to me, before he gave it to Jenkinson; but I say it very seriously, and you know me enough to be certain I am in earnest, that I would not accept it upon any account. Any favour lord North will do for you will give me all the satisfaction I desire. I am near fifty-three; I have neither ambition nor interest to gratify. I can live comfortably for the remainder of my life, though I should be poorer by fourteen hundred pounds a-year; but I should have no comfort if, in the dregs of life, I did any thing that I would not do when I was twenty years younger. I will trust to you, therefore, to make use of this information in the friendly manner I mean it, and to prevent my being hurt by its being taken otherwise than as a design to serve those to whom you wish well. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Strawberry-hill, Sunday.

I AM sorry I wrote to you last night, for I find it is Mrs. Jenkinson that is dead, and not Mr., and therefore I should be glad to have this arrive time enough to prevent your mentioning the contents of my letter. In that case, I should not be concerned to have given you that mark of my constant good wishes,

nor to have talked to you of my affairs, which are as well in your breast as my own. They never disturb me; for my mind has long taken its stamp, and as I shall leave nobody much younger than myself behind me for whom I am solicitous, I have no desire beyond being easy for the rest of my life: I could not be so if I stooped to have obligations to any man beyond what it would ever be in my power to return. When I was in parliament, I had the additional reason of choosing to be entirely free; and my strongest reason of all is, that I will be at liberty to speak truth both living and dead. This outweighs all considerations of interest, and will convince you, though I believe you do not want that conviction, that my yesterday's letter was as sincere in its resolution as in its professions to you. Let the matter drop entirely, as it is now of no consequence. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Strawberry-hill, Oct 3, 1770.

I AM going on in the sixth week of my fit, and having had a return this morning in my knee, I cannot flatter myself with any approaching prospect of recovery. The gate of painful age seems open to me, and I must travel through it as I may! If you have not written one word for another, I am at a loss to understand you. You say you have taken a house in London for a year, that you are gone to Waldeshare for *six months*, and then shall come for the winter. Either you mean *six weeks*, or differ with most people in reckoning April the beginning of winter. I hope your pen was in a hurry, rather than your calculation so uncommon; I certainly shall be glad of your residing in London. I have long wished to live nearer to you, but it was in happier days. I am now so dismayed by these returns of gout, that I can promise myself few comforts in any future scenes of my life. I am much obliged to lord Guildford and lord North, and was very sorry that the latter came to see Strawberry in so bad a day, and when I was so extremely ill, and full of pain, that I scarce knew he was here; and as my coachman was gone to London to fetch me bootikins, there was no carriage

to offer him; but, indeed, in the condition I then was, I was not capable of doing any of the honours of my house, suffering at once in my hand, knee, and both feet. I am still lifted out of bed by two servants; and by their help travel from my bed-chamber down to the couch in my blue room; but I shall conclude, rather than tire you with so unpleasant a history. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO GEORGE MONTAGU, Esq.

Arlington-street, Oct. 16, 1770.

AT last I have been able to remove to London; but though seven long weeks are gone and over since I was seized, I am only able to creep about upon a flat floor, but cannot go up and down stairs. However, I have patience, as I can at least fetch a book for myself, instead of having a servant bring me a wrong one.

I am much obliged to lord Guildford for his goodness to me, and beg my thanks to him. When you go to Canterbury, pray don't wake the black prince;¹ I am very unwarlike, and desire to live the rest of my time upon the stock of glory I saved to my share out of the last war.

I know not more news than I did at Strawberry; there are not more people in town than I saw there, and I intend to return thither on Friday or Saturday. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Arlington-street, Oct. 16. 1770.

THOUGH I have so very little to say, it is but my duty, my dear lord, to thank you for your extreme goodness to me and your inquiring after me. I was very bad again last week, but have mended so much since Friday night, that I really now believe the fit is over. I came to town on Sunday, and can creep about my room even without a stick, which is more felicity to

¹ Edward the Black Prince was buried in Canterbury Cathedral. His monument was one of the most splendid in the building. [Ed.]

me than if I had got a white one. I do not aim yet at such preferment as walking up stairs; but having moulted my stick, I flatter myself I shall come forth again without being lame.

The few I have seen tell me there is nobody else in town. That is no grievance to me, when I should be at the mercy of all that should please to bestow their idle time upon me. I know nothing of the war-egg, but that sometimes it is to be hatched and sometimes to be addled. Many folks get into the nest, and sit as hard upon it as they can, concluding it will produce a golden chick. As I shall not be a feather the better for it, I hate that game-breed, and prefer the old hen Peace and her dunghill brood. My compliments to my lady and all her poultry.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Nov. 15, 1770.

DEAR SIR,

IF you have not engaged your interest in Cambridgeshire, you would oblige me much by bestowing it on young Mr. Brand, the son of my particular acquaintance, and our old school-fellow. I am very unapt to trouble my head about elections, but wish success to this.

If you see Bannerman, I should be glad you would tell him that I am going to print the last volume of my Painters, and should like to employ him again for some of the heads, if he cares to undertake them: though there will be a little trouble, as he does not reside in London. I am in a hurry, and am forced to be brief, but am always glad to hear of you, and from you.

Your's most sincerely.

P.S. Mr. Tyson promised me all his etchings, but has forgot me.

¹ The dispute with Spain relative to the possession of the Falkland Islands, had led to a considerable augmentation both of the army and navy; which gave an appearance of authenticity to the rumours of war which were now in circulation. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Nov. 20, 1770.

I BELIEVE our letters crossed one another without knowing it. Mine, it seems, was quite unnecessary, for I find Mr. Brand has given up the election. Yours was very kind and obliging, as they always are. Pray be so good as to thank Mr. Tyson for me a thousand times; I am vastly pleased with his work, and hope he will give me another of the plates for my volume of heads (for I shall bind up his present), and I by no means relinquish his promise of a complete set of his etchings, and of a visit to Strawberry-hill. Why should it not be with you and Mr. Essex, whom I shall be very glad to see—but what do you talk of a single day? Is that all you allow me in two years?

I rejoice to see Mr. Bentham's advertisement at last. I depend on you, dear Sir, for procuring me his book the instant it is possible to have it. Pray make my compliments to all that good family.

I am enraged, and almost in despair, at Pearson the glass-painter, he is so idle and dissolute—he has done very little of the window, though what he has done is glorious, and approaches very nearly to Price.

My last volume of Painters begins to be printed this week; but, as the plates are not begun, I doubt it will be long before the whole is ready. I mentioned to you in my last Thursday's letter a hint about Bannerman, the engraver. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Dec. 20th, 1770.

DEAR SIR,

I am very zealous, as you know, for the work, but I agree with you in expecting very little success from the plan. Activity is the best implement in such undertakings, and that seems to be wanting; and, without that, it were vain to think of who would be at the expense. I do not know whether it were not best that Mr. Essex should publish his remarks as simply as he can.

For my own part, I can do no more than I have done,—sketch out the plan. I grow too old, and am grown too indolent, to engage in any more works: nor have I time. I wish to finish some things I have by me, and to have done. The last volume of my *Anecdotes*, of which I was tired, is completed; and with them I shall take my leave of publications. The last years of one's life are fit for nothing but idleness and quiet, and I am as indifferent to fame as to politics.

I can be of as little use to Mr. Granger in recommending him to the Antiquarian Society. I dropped my attendance there four or five years ago, from being sick of their ignorance and stupidity, and have not been three times amongst them since. They have chosen to expose their dulness to the world, and crowned it with dean Milles's¹ nonsense. I have written a little answer to the last, which you shall see, and then wash my hands of them.

To say the truth, I have no very sanguine expectation about the Ely window. The glass-painter, though admirable, proves a very idle worthless fellow, and has yet scarce done any thing of consequence. I gave Dr. Nichols notice of his character, but found him apprized of it. The doctor, however, does not despair, but pursues him warmly. I wish it may succeed!

If you go over to Cambridge, be so good as to ask Mr. Grey when he proposes being in town; he talked of last month. I must beg you, too, to thank Mr. Tyson for his last letter. I can say no more to the plan than I have said. If he and Mr. Essex should like to come to town, I shall be very willing to talk it over with them, but I can by no means think of engaging in any part of the composition.

These holidays I hope to have time to arrange my drawings, and give Bannerman some employment towards my book—but I am in no hurry to have it appear, as it speaks of times so recent; for though I have been very tender of not hurting any living relations of the artists, the latter were in general so indifferent, that I doubt their families will not be very well content

¹ Dr. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exeter, an eminent English divine, and many years president of the Antiquarian Society. He was born in Hampshire 1713, and died 13th Feb. 1784. He engaged very ardently in the Chattertonian controversy, and published the whole of the poems purporting to be written by Rowley, with a glossary. He was also concerned with Pocock in the publication of the "*Inscriptiones Antiquæ a J. Milles et E. Pococke Editæ.*" Folio. 1752. [Ed.]

with the coldness of the praises I have been able to bestow. This reason, with my unwillingness to finish the work, and the long interval between the composition of this and the other volumes, have, I doubt, made the greatest part a very indifferent performance. An author, like other mechanics, never does well when he is tired of his profession.

I have been told that, besides Mr. Tyson, there are two other gentlemen engravers at Cambridge. I think their names are Sharp or Show, and Cobbe, but I am not at all sure of either. I should be glad, however, if I could procure any of their portraits—and I do not forget that I am already in your debt. Boydell is going to re-commence a suite of illustrious heads, and I am to give him a list of indubitable portraits of remarkable persons that have never been engraved; but I have protested against his receiving two sorts; the one, any old head of a family, when the person was moderately considerable; the other, spurious or doubtful heads; both sorts apt to be sent in by families who wish to crowd their own names into the work; as was the case more than once in Houbraken's set, and of which honest Vertue often complained to me. The duke of Buckingham, Carr, earl of Somerset, and Thurloe, in that list, are absolutely not genuine—the first is John Digby earl of Bristol. Yours, &c.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Christmas day.

If poplar-pines ever grow,¹ it must be in such a soaking season as this. I wish you would send half-a-dozen by some Henley barge to meet me next Saturday at Strawberry-hill, that they may be as tall as the monument by next summer. My cascades give themselves the airs of cataracts, and Mrs. Clive looks like

¹ The Rev. Michael Tyson, of Bennet College, a good antiquary, and an amateur artist, who amused himself with etching portraits of some of the old masters of his college, as well as of the most noted characters in and about Cambridge. [Ed.]

¹ The first poplar-pine (or, as they have since been called, Lombardy poplar) planted in England was at Park-place, on the bank of the river near the great arch. It was a cutting brought from Turin by the late lord Rochford in his carriage, and planted by general Conway's own hand. [Or.]

the sun rising out of the ocean. Poor Mr. Raftor² is tired to death of their solitude ; and, as his passion is walking, he talks with rapture of the brave rows of lamps all along the street, just as I used formerly to think no trees beautiful without lamps to them, like those at Vauxhall.

As I came to town but to dinner, and have not seen a soul, I do not know whether there is any news. I am just going to the princess,³ where I shall hear all there is. I went to king Arthur⁴ on Saturday, and was tired to death, both of the nonsense of the piece and the execrable performance, the singers being still worse than the actors. The scenes are little better (though Garrick boasts of rivalling the French opera), except a pretty bridge, and a Gothic church with windows of painted glass. This scene, which should be a barbarous temple of Woden, is a perfect cathedral, and the devil officiates at a kind of high mass ! I never saw greater absurdities.

Adieu !

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Dec. 29, 1770.

THE trees¹ came safe : I thank you for them : they are gone to Strawberry, and I am going to plant them. This paragraph would not call for a letter, but I have news for you of importance enough to dignify a dispatch. The duc de Choiseul is fallen ! The express from lord Harcourt² arrived yesterday morning ; the event happened last Monday night, and the courier set out so immediately, that not many particulars are yet known. The duke was allowed but three hours to prepare himself, and ordered to retire to his seat at Chanteloup : but some letters say,

² Brother to Mrs. Clive. He had been an actor himself, and, when his sister retired from the stage, lived with her in the house Mr. Walpole had given her at Twickenham. [Or.]

³ Princess Amelia. [Or.]

⁴ It is fortunate that Walpole has confined himself to blaming the singers. The music, which contains some of Purcell's finest compositions, ought to have made Dryden's play endurable even to so fastidious a critic as our author. [Ed.]

¹ The Lombardy poplars. [Or.]

² Then ambassador at Paris. [Or.]

il ira plus loin. The duc de Praslin is banished, too, and Chatelet is forbidden to visit Choiseul. Chatelet was to have had the marine; and I am sure is no loss to us. The chevalier de Muy is made secretary of state *pour la guerre*;³ and it is concluded that the duc d'Aiguillon is prime-minister but was not named so in the first hurry. There! there is a revolution! there is a new scene opened! Will it advance the war? Will it make peace? These are the questions all mankind is asking. This whale has swallowed up all gudgeon-questions. Lord Harcourt writes, that the d'Aiguillonists had officiously taken opportunities of assuring him, that if they prevailed it would be peace; but in this country we know that opponents turned ministers *can* change their language. It is added, that the morning of Choiseul's banishment,⁴ the king said to him, *Monsieur, je vous ai dit que je ne voulais point la guerre.* Yet how does this agree with Francès's⁵ eager protestations that Choiseul's fate depended on preserving the peace? How does it agree with the comptroller-general's offer of finding funds for the war, and of Choiseul's proving he could not?—But how reconcile half the politics one hears? De Guisnes and Francès sent their excuses to the duchess of Argyll last night; and I suppose the Spaniards, too, for none of them were there.—Well! I shall let all this bustle cool for two days; for what Englishman does not sacrifice any thing to go his Saturday out of town?—And yet I am very much interested in this event; I feel much for madame de Choiseul, though nothing for her *Corsican* husband; but I am in the utmost anxiety for my dear old friend,⁵ who passed every evening with the duchess, and was thence in great credit; and what is worse, though nobody, I think, can be savage enough to

³ The chevalier, afterwards Maréchal de Muy, was offered that place, but declined it. He eventually filled it in the early part of the reign of Louis XVI. [Ed.]

⁴ The duc de Choiseul was dismissed from the ministry through the intrigues of madame du Barri, who accused him of an improper correspondence with Spain. [Ed.]

⁵ Then the chargé des affaires from the French court in London. [Or.]

⁶ Madame du Deffand. [Or.] It appears by her "Correspondence with Walpole," vol. ii. p. 123, that she had addressed to him on the 27th December, a letter of considerable length, filled with details relative to the dismissal of Choiseul, which took place on the 24th, and the appointment of his successor, but the letter is unfortunately lost. [Ed.]

take away her pension, she may find great difficulty to get it paid—and then her poor heart is so good and warm, that this blow on her friends, at her great age, may kill her. I have had no letter, nor had last post—whether it was stopped, or whether she apprehended the event, as I imagine—for every body observed, on Tuesday night, at your brother's, that Francès could not open his mouth. In short, I am most seriously alarmed about her.

You have seen in the papers the designed arrangements in the law. They now say there is some hitch; but I suppose it turns on some demands, and so will be got over by their being granted.

Mr. Mason, the bard, gave me, yesterday, the enclosed memorial, and begged I would recommend it to you. It is in favour of a very ingenious painter. Adieu! the sun shines brightly; but it is one o'clock, and it will be set before I get to Twickenham.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Jan. 10, 1771.

As I am acquainted with Mr. Paul Sandby, the brother of the architect,¹ I asked him if there was a design, as I had heard, of making a print or prints of King's College Chapel, by the king's order? He answered directly, by no means. His brother made a general sketch of the chapel for the use of the lectures he reads on architecture at the Royal Academy. Thus, dear sir, Mr. Essex may be perfectly easy that there is no intention of interfering with his work. I then mentioned to Mr. Sandby Mr. Essex's plan, which he much approved, but said the plates would cost a great sum. The king, he thought, would be inclined to patronize the work; but I own I do not know how to get it laid before him. His own artists would probably discourage any scheme that might entrench on their own advantages. Mr. Thomas Sandby, the architect, is the only one of

¹ Paul Sandby, the well-known artist in water colours, was brother to Thomas Sandby, who was professor of architecture in the Royal Academy of London. [Ed.]

them I am acquainted with; and Mr. Essex must think whether he would like to let him into any participation of the work. If I can get any other person to mention it to his majesty, I will; but you know me, and that I have always kept clear of connexions with courts and ministers, and have no interest with either, and perhaps my recommendation might do as much hurt as good, especially as the artists in favour might be jealous of one who understands a little of their professions, and is apt to, say what he thinks. In truth, there is another danger, which is that they might not assist Mr. Essex without views of profiting of his labours. I am slightly acquainted with Mr. Chambers² the architect, and have a good opinion of him: if Mr. Essex approves my communicating his plan to him or Mr. Sandby, I should think it more likely to succeed by their intervention, than by any lord of the court; for, at last, the king would certainly take the opinion of his artists. When you have talked this over with Mr. Essex, let me know the result. Till he has determined, there can be no use in Mr. Essex's coming to town.

I am much obliged to you, as I am continually, for the trouble you have taken to procure me Mr. Orde's, Mr. Topham's, and Mr. Sharpe's prints, and shall be very thankful for them. As to Roman antiquities, I do not collect prints of them, having engaged in too many other branches already.

Mr. Gray will bring down some of my drawings to Bannerman, and when you go over to Cambridge, I will beg you now and then to supervise him. For Mr. Bentham's book, I rather despair of it; and should it ever appear, he will have made people expect it too long, which will be of no service to it, though I do not doubt of its merit. Mr. Gray will show you my answer to Dr. Milles.³

² Afterwards sir William Chambers. He was a Swede by birth, and the author of the well-known "Treatise on Civil Architecture," of a "Dissertation on Oriental Gardening," &c. Somerset-house was built by him. He died 8th March 1796. [Ed.]

³ "Reply to the Observations on the Remarks of the Rev. D. Milles, dean of Exeter, and president of the Society of Antiquaries on the Ward-Robe Account." It is inserted in the second volume of his collected works, which Walpole*printed at Strawberry Hill in 1770. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 29, 1771.

DEAR SIR,

I have but time to write you a line, that I may not detain Mr. Essex, who is so good as to take charge of this note, and of a box, which I am sure will give you pleasure, and I beg may give you a little trouble. It contains the very valuable seven letters of Edward the sixth to Barnaby Fitz-patrick. Lord Ossory, to whom they belong, has lent them to me to print: but to facilitate that, and to prevent their being rubbed or hurt by the printer, I must entreat your exactness to copy them, and return them with the copies. I need not desire your particular care; for you value these things as much as I do, and will be able to make them out better than I can do, from being so much versed in old writing. Forgive my taking this liberty with you, which, I flatter myself, will not be disagreeable. Mr. Essex and Mr. Tyson dined with me at Strawberry-hill; but could not stay so long as I wished. The party would have been still more agreeable if you had made a fourth. Adieu! dear sir,

Yours ever.

P.S. I am rejoiced you are delivered from the dread of inundations.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, June 11, 1771.

You are very kind, dear sir, and I ought to be, nay, what is more, I am, ashamed of giving you so much trouble; but I am in no hurry for the letters. I shall not set out till the 7th of next month, and it will be sufficient if I receive them a week before I set out.

Mr. C. C. C. C. is very welcome to attack me about a duchess of Norfolk. He is ever welcome to be in the right; to the edification I hope of all the matrons at the Antiquarian Society, who I trust will insert his criticism in the next volume of their *Archæologia*, or *Old Women's Logic*; but, indeed, I cannot bestow my time on any more of them, nor employ myself in

detecting witches for vomiting pins. When they turn extortioners like Mr. Masters,¹ the law should punish them, not only for roguery, but for exceeding their province, which our ancestors limited to killing their neighbour's cow, or crucifying dolls of wax. For my own part, I am so far from being out of charity with him, that I would give him a nag or new broom whenever he has a mind to ride to the Antiquarian sabbat, and preach against me. Though you have more cause to be angry, laugh at him as I do. One has not life enough to throw away on all the fools and knaves that come across me. I have often been attacked, and never replied but to Mr. Hume and Dr. Milles—to the first, because he had a name; to the second, because he had a mind to have one:—and yet I was in the wrong, for it was the only way he could attain one. In truth it is being too self-instructed, to expose only one's private antagonists, when one lets worse men pass unmolested. Does a booby hurt me by an attack on me, more than by any other foolish thing he does? Does not he tease me more by any thing he says to me without attacking me, than by any thing he says against me behind my back? I shall, therefore, most certainly never inquire after or read Mr. C. C. C. C.'s criticism, but leave him to oblivion with her grace of Norfolk, and our wise Society. As I doubt my own writings will soon be forgotten, I need not fear that those of my answers will be remembered.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 20, 1771.

I HAVE waited impatiently, my dear lord, for something worth putting into a letter; but trees do not speak in parliament, nor flowers write in the newspapers; and they are almost the

¹ There is a note on this letter in Cole's hand-writing. Mr. Mason had informed him, that Mr. Masters had lately read a paper at the Ant. Soc. against some mistake of Mr. Walpole's respecting a duchess of Norfolk, and he adds, "This I informed him [Mr. Walpole] of in my Letter, and said something to him of his [Masters'] extortion in making me pay 40*l.* towards the repairing his vicarage house at Waterbeche, which he pretended he had fitted up for my reception." [Or.]

only beings I have seen. I dined on Tuesday at Notting-hill¹ with the countesses of Powis and Holderness, lord and lady Pelham, and lord Frederic Cavendish—and Pam; and shall go to town on Friday to meet the same company at lady Holderness's; and this short journal comprises almost my whole history and knowledge.

I must now ask your lordship's and lady Strafford's commands for Paris. I shall set out on the seventh of next month. You will think, though you will not tell me so, that these are very juvenile jaunts at my age. Indeed I should be ashamed if I went for any other pleasure but that of once more seeing my dear blind friend,² whose much greater age forbids my depending on seeing her often. It will, indeed, be amusing to change the scene of politics; for though I have done with our own, one cannot help hearing them—nay, reading them; for, like flies, they come to breakfast with one's bread and butter. I wish there was any other vehicle for them but a newspaper; a place into which, considering how they are exhausted, I am sure they have no pretensions. The duc d'Aiguillon, I hear, is minister. Their politics, some way or other, must end seriously, either in despotism, a civil war, or assassination. Methinks, it is playing deep for the power of tyranny. C***** F***** is more moderate: he only games for an hundred thousand pounds that he has not.

Have you read the *Life of Benvenuto Cellini*,³ my lord? I am angry with him for being more distracted and wrong-headed than my lord Herbert. Till the revival of these two, I thought the present age had borne the palm of absurdity from all its predecessors. But I find our contemporaries are quiet good folks, that only game till they hang themselves, and do not kill every body they meet in the street. Who would have thought we were so reasonable?

Ranelagh, they tell me, is full of foreign dukes. There is a

¹ The villa of lady Mary Coke, near Kensington. [Or.]

² Madame du Deffand. [Or.]

³ The celebrated Florentine sculptor, "one of the most extraordinary men in an extraordinary age." So Walpole styles him.

His life, written by himself, was first published in English in 1771, in 2 vols. 8vo. from a translation by Thomas Nugent, LL.D. The last edition (revised from the Italian, and with notes by Thomas Roseoe, Esq.) appeared in 1822. [Ed.]

duc de la Tremouille, a duc d'Arenberg, and other grantees. I know the former, and am not sorry to be out of his way.

It is not pleasant to leave groves and lawns and rivers for a dirty town with a dirtier ditch, calling itself the Seine; but I dare not encounter the sea and bad inns in cold weather. This consideration will bring me back by the end of August. I should be happy to execute any commission for your lordship. You know how earnestly I wish always to show myself

Your lordship's most faithful humble servant.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, June 22, 1771.

I JUST write you a line, dear sir, to acknowledge the receipt of the box of papers, which is come very safe, and to give you a thousand thanks for the trouble you have taken. As you promise me another letter, I will wait to answer it.

At present I will only beg another favour, and with less shame, as it is of a kind you will like to grant. I have lately been at lord Ossory's at Amptill.¹ You know Catherine of Arragon lived some time there.² Nothing remains of the castle, nor any marks of residence, but a very small bit of her garden. I promised to lord Ossory to erect a cross to her memory on the spot, and he will. I wish, therefore, you could, from your collections of books, or memory, pick out an authentic form of a cross, of a better appearance than the common run. It must be raised on two or three steps; and if they were octagon, would it not be handsomer? Her arms must be hung like an Order upon it. Here is something of my idea.³ The shield appendant to a collar. We will have some inscriptions to mark the cause of erection. Adieu!

Your most obliged.

¹ Now the seat of Lord Holland, to whom it has devolved in right of his mother, who was Mary, eldest daughter of John Fitzpatrick, first earl of Upper Ossory. [Ed.]

² After her divorce from Henry the Eighth. [Ed.]

³ A rough sketch in the margin of the letter. [Or.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 24, 1771.

DEAR SIR,

When I wrote to you t'other day, I had not opened the box of letters, and consequently had not found yours, for which, and the prints, I give you a thousand thanks; though Count Bryan I have, and will return to you. Old Walker¹ is very like, and is valuable for being mentioned in the Dunciad, and a curiosity, from being mentioned there without abuse.

Your notes are very judicious,² and your information most useful to me in drawing up some little preface to the Letters, which, however, I shall not have time now to do before my journey, as I shall set out on Sunday se'nnight. I like your motto much. The lady Cecilia's Letters are, as you say, more curious for the writer than them attar. We know very little of those daughters of Edward IV. Yet she and her sister Devonshire lived to be old; especially Cecily, who was married to lord Wells; and I have found why: he was first cousin to Henry VII., who, I suppose, thought it the safest match for her. I wish I knew all she and her sisters knew of their brothers, and their uncle Richard III.

Much good may it do my lord of Canterbury with his parboiled stag! Sure there must be more curiosities in Bennet library!

Though your letter is so entertaining and useful to me, the passage I like best is a promise you make me of a visit in the autumn with Mr. Essex. Pray put him in mind of it, as I shall you. It would add much to the obligation if you would bring two or three of your MSS. volumes of collections with you.

TO JOHN CHUTE, Esq.

Amiens, Tuesday evening, July 9, 1771.

I AM got no farther yet, as I travel leisurely, and do not venture to fatigue myself. My voyage was but of four hours.

¹ Dr. Walker, vice-master of Trinity College, by Lambourne. [Or.]

² From King Edward's Journal relating to Mr. Fitzpatrick. [Or.]

I was sick only by choice and precaution, and find myself in perfect health. The enemy, I hope, has not returned to pinch you again, and that you defy the foul fiend. The weather is but lukewarm, and I should choose to have all the windows shut, if my smelling was not much more summerly than my feeling; but the frowsiness of obsolete tapestry and needle-work is insupportable. Here are old fleas and bugs talking of Louis *quatorze* like tattered refugees in the Park, and they make poor Rosette attend to them, whether she will or not. This is a woful account of an evening in July, and which monsieur de St. Lambert has omitted in his Seasons, though more natural than any thing he has placed there. If the Grecian religion had gone into the folly of self-mortification, I suppose the devotees of Flora would have shut themselves up in a nasty inn, and have punished their noses for the sensuality of having smelt to a rose or a honey-suckle. This is all I have yet to say; for I have had no adventure, no accident, nor seen a soul but my cousin R*** W***, whom I met on the road and spoke to in his chaise. To-morrow I shall lie at Chantilly, and be at Paris early on Thursday. The C*** are there already. Good night—and a *sweet* one to you!

Paris, Wednesday night, July 10.

I WAS so suffocated with my inn last night, that I mustered all my resolution, rose with the *alouette*, and was in my chaise by five o'clock this morning. I got hither by eight this evening, tired, but rejoiced; have had a comfortable dish of tea, and am going to bed in clean sheets. I sink myself even to my dear old woman and my sister; for it is impossible to sit down and be made charming at this time of night after fifteen posts, and after having been here twenty times before.

At Chantilly I crossed on the countess of W***, who lies there to-night on her way to England. But I concluded she had no curiosity about me—and I could not brag of more about her—and so we had no intercourse.

I am woe-begone to find my lord F*** in the same hotel. He is as starched as an old-fashioned plaited neckcloth, and come to suck wisdom from this curious school of philosophy. He reveres me because I was acquainted with his father; and that does not at all increase my partiality to the son.

Luckily, the post departs early to-morrow morning. I thought you would like to hear I was arrived well. I should be happy to hear you are so; but do not torment yourself too soon, nor will I torment you. I have fixed the 26th of August for setting out on my return. These jaunts are too juvenile. I am ashamed to look back and remember in what year of Methuselah I was here first. Rosette sends her blessing to her daughter. Adieu !

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, July 30, 1771.

I do not know where you are, nor where this will find you, nor when it will set out to seek you, as I am not certain by whom I shall send it. It is of little consequence, as I have nothing material to tell you, but what you probably may have heard.

The distress here is incredible, especially at court. The king's tradesmen are ruined, his servants starving, and even angels and archangels cannot get their pensions and salaries, but sing "Woe! woe! woe!" instead of Hosannahs. Compeigne is abandoned; Villiers-coterets and Chantilly¹ crowded, and Chanteloup² still more in fashion, whither every body goes that pleases; though, when they ask leave, the answer is, *Je ne le defends ni le permet*s. This is the first time that ever the will of a king of France was interpreted against his inclination. Yet, after annihilating his parliament, and ruining public credit, he tamely submits to be affronted by his own servants. Mad. de Beauveau, and two or three high-spirited dames, defy this czar of Gaul. Yet they and their cabal are as inconsistent on the other hand. They make epigrams, sing vaudevilles against the mistress, hand about libels against the chancellor, and have no more effect than a sky-rocket; but in three months will die to

¹ The country palaces of the duke of Orleans and the prince of Condé, who were in disgrace at court, for having espoused the cause of the parliament of Paris, banished by the chancellor Maupou. [Or.]

² The country seat of the duc de Choiseul, to which, on his ceasing to be first minister, he was banished by the king. [Or.]

go to court, and to be invited to sup with madame du Barry. The only real struggle is between the chancellor³ and the duc d'Aiguillon. The first is false, bold, determined, and not subject to little qualms. The other is less known, communicates himself to nobody, is suspected of deep policy and deep designs, but seems to intend to set out under a mask of very smooth varnish; for he has just obtained the payment of all his bitter enemy la Chalotai's pensions and arrears. He has the advantage, too, of being but moderately detested in comparison of his rival, and, what he values more, the interest of the mistress.⁴ The comptroller-general⁵ serves both, by acting mischief more sensibly felt; for he ruins every body but those who purchase a respite from his mistress. He dispenses bankruptcy by retail, and will fall, because he cannot even by these means be useful enough. They are striking off nine millions from *la caisse militaire*, five from the marine, and one from the *affaires étrangères*: yet all this will not extricate them. You never saw a great nation in so disgraceful a position. Their next prospect is not better: it rests on an *imbecille*, both in mind and body.

July 31.

MR. CHURCHILL and my sister⁶ set out to-night after supper, and I shall send this letter by them. There are no new books, no new plays, no new novels; nay, no new fashions. They have draggèd old mademoiselle le Maure out of a retreat of thirty years, to sing at the Colisée, which is a most gaudy Ranelagh, gilt, painted, and becupided like an opera, but not calculated to last as long as Mother Coliseum, being composed of chalk and pasteboard. Round it are courts of *treillage*, that serve for nothing, and behind it a canal, very like a horse-pond, on which there are fireworks and justs. Altogether it is very pretty; but as there are few nabobs and nabobesses in this country, and as the middling and common people are not much

³ Maupou. [Or.]

⁴ Madame du Barry. [Or.]

⁵ The abbé Terrai. [Or.] The abbé Terrai was comptroller-general of the finances. His mistress, known in the fashionable circles of Paris by the name of La Sultane, received money (it is supposed in concert with the abbé himself) for every act of favour or justice solicited from the department over which he presided. [Ed.]

⁶ Lady Mary Churchill, wife of Charles Churchill, esq., and half-sister to Walpole. [Ed.]

richer than Job when he had lost every thing but his patience, the proprietors are on the point of being ruined, unless the project takes place that is talked of. It is, to oblige Corneille, Racine, and Molière to hold their tongues twice a-week, that their audiences may go to the Colisée. This is like our parliament's adjourning when senators want to go to Newmarket. There is a monsieur Guillard writing a "History of the Rivalité de la France et de l'Angleterre."—I hope he will not omit this parallel.

The instance of their poverty that strikes *me* most, who make political observations by the thermometer of baubles, is, that there is nothing new in their shops. I know the faces of every snuff-box and every tea-cup as well as those of madame du Lac and monsieur Poirier. I have chosen some cups and saucers for my lady Ailesbury, as she ordered me; but I cannot say they are at all extraordinary. I have bespoken two cabriolets for her, instead of six, because I think them very dear, and that she may have four more if she likes them. I shall bring, too, a sample of a *baguette* that suits them. For myself, between economy and the want of novelty, I have not laid out five guineas—a very memorable anecdote in the history of my life. Indeed, the czarina and I have a little dispute: she has offered to purchase the whole Crozat collection of pictures, at which I had intended to ruin myself. The Turks take her for it!—*A-propos*, they are sending from hence fourscore officers to Poland, each of whom I suppose, like Almanzor, can stamp with his foot and raise an army.

As my sister travels like a Tartar princess with her whole horde, she will arrive too late almost for me to hear from you in return to this letter, which in truth requires no answer, *vû que* I shall set out myself on the 26th of August. You will not imagine that I am glad to save myself the pleasure of hearing from you, but I would not give you the trouble of writing unnecessarily. If you are at home, and not in Scotland, you will judge by these dates where to find me. Adieu!

Yours ever.

P.S. Instead of restoring the Jesuits, they are proceeding to annihilate the Celestines, Augustines, and some other orders.

To JOHN CHUTE, Esq.

Paris, August 5, 1771.

It is a great satisfaction to me to find by your letter of the 30th, that you have had no return of your gout. I have been assured here, that the best remedy is to cut one's nails in hot water.—It is, I fear, as certain as any other remedy ! It would at least be so here, if their bodies were of a piece with their understandings ; or if both were as curable as they are the contrary. Your prophecy, I doubt, is not better founded than the prescription. I may be lame ; but I shall never be a duck, nor deal in the garbage of the alley.

I envy your *Strawberry tide*, and need not say how much I wish I was there to receive you. Methinks, I should be as glad of a little grass, as a seaman after a long voyage. Yet English gardening gains ground here prodigiously—not much at a time, indeed—I have literally seen one, that is exactly like a tailor's paper of patterns. There is a monsieur Boutin, who has tacked a piece of what he calls an English garden to a set of stone terraces, with steps of turf. There are three or four very high hills, almost as high as, and exactly in the shape of, a tansy pudding. You squeeze between these and a river, that is conducted at obtuse angles in a stone channel, and supplied by a pump ; and when walnuts come in I suppose it will be navigable. In a corner enclosed by a chalk wall are the samples I mentioned : there is a stripe of grass, another of corn, and a third *en friche*, exactly in the order of beds in a nursery. They have translated Mr. Whateley's book,¹ and the Lord knows what barbarism is going to be laid at our door. This new *Anglomanie* will literally be *mad English*.

New *arrêts*, new retrenchments, new misery, stalk forth every day. The parliament of Besançon is dissolved ; so are the *grenadiers de France*. The king's tradesmen are all bankrupt, no pensions are paid, and every body is reforming their suppers and equipages. Despotism makes converts faster than ever

¹ "Observations on Modern Gardening. London, 1770, 8vo." Mr. Whateley was likewise the author of a valuable tract published anonymously in 1785, entitled "*Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare*." [Ed.]

Christianity did. Louis *quinze* is the true *rex christianissimus*, and has ten times more success than his dragooning great-grandfather. Adieu, my dear sir ! Yours most faithfully.

Friday 9th.

THIS was to have gone by a private hand, but cannot depart till Monday ; so I may be continuing my letter till I bring it myself. I have been again at the Chartreuse ; and, though it was the sixth time, I am more enchanted with those paintings² than ever. If it is not the first work in the world, and must yield to the Vatican, yet in simplicity and harmony it beats Raphael himself. There is a vapour over all the pictures, that makes them more natural than any representation of objects—I cannot conceive how it is effected ! You see them through the shine of a south-east wind. These poor folks do not know the inestimable treasure they possess—but they are perishing these pictures, and one gazes at them as at a setting sun. There is the purity of Racine in them, but they give me more pleasure—and I should much sooner be tired of the poet than of the painter.

It is very singular that I have not half the satisfaction in going into churches and convents that I used to have. The consciousness that the vision is dispelled, the want of fervour so obvious in the religious, the solitude that one knows proceeds from contempt, not from contemplation, make those places appear like abandoned theatres destined to destruction. The monks trot about as if they had not long to stay there ; and what used to be holy gloom is now but dirt and darkness. There is no more deception than in a tragedy acted by candle-snuffers. One is sorry to think that an empire of common sense would not be very picturesque ; for, as there is nothing but taste that can compensate for the imagination of madness, I doubt there will never be twenty men of taste for twenty thousand madmen. The world will no more see Athens, Rome, and the Medici again, than a succession of five good emperors, like Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines.

August 13.

Mr. EDMONSON has called on me ; and, as he sets out to-morrow, I can safely trust my letter to him.

² The life of St. Bruno, painted by Le Sœur, in the cloister of the Chartreuse at Paris. [Or.]

I have, I own, been much shocked at reading Gray's³ death in the papers. 'Tis an hour that makes one forget any subject of complaint, especially towards one with whom I lived in friendship from thirteen years old. As self lies so rooted in self, no doubt the nearness of our ages made the stroke recoil to my own breast; and having so little expected his death, it is plain how little I expect my own. Yet to you, who of all men living are the most forgiving, I need not excuse the concern I feel. I fear most men ought to apologize for their want of feeling, instead of palliating that sensation when they have it. I thought that what I had seen of the world had hardened my heart; but I find that it had formed my language, not extinguished my tenderness. In short, I am really shocked—nay, I am hurt at my own weakness, as I perceive that when I love any body, it is for my life; and I have had too much reason not to wish that such a disposition may very seldom be put to the trial. You, at least, are the only person to whom I would venture to make such a confession.

Adieu, my dear sir!—Let me know when I arrive, which will be about the last day of the month, when I am likely to see you. I have much to say to you. Of being here I am most heartily tired, and nothing but this dear old woman should keep me here an hour—I am weary of them to death—but that is not new!

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, August 11, 1771.

You will have seen, I hope, before now, that I have not neglected writing to you. I sent you a letter by my sister, but doubt she has been a great while upon the road, as they travel with a large family. I was not sure where you was, and would not write at random by the post.

I was just going out when I received yours and the newspapers. I was struck in a most sensible manner, when, after

³ The poet. [Or.] Thomas Gray, esq., the author of the "Elegy in a Country Church-yard," "The Bard," &c., one of the most learned and elegant scholars of his day, died 31st July 1771, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. His Poems and Correspondence are announced for publication under the editorship of the Rev. John Mitford. [Ed.]

reading your letter, I saw in the newspapers that Gray is dead ! So very ancient an intimacy, and, I suppose, the natural reflection to self on losing a person but a year older, made me absolutely start in my chair. It seemed more a corporal than a mental blow ; and yet I am exceedingly concerned for him, and every body must be so for the loss of such a genius. He called on me but two or three days before I came hither ; he complained of being ill, and talked of the gout in his stomach—but I expected his death no more than my own—and yet the same death will probably be mine.—I am full of all these reflections—but shall not attrist you with them :—only do not wonder that my letter will be short, when my mind is full of what I do not give vent to. It was but last night that I was thinking how few persons last, if one lives to be old, to whom one can talk without reserve. It is impossible to be intimate with the young, because they and the old cannot converse on the same common topics ; and of the old that survive, there are few one can commence a friendship with, because one has probably all one's life despised their heart or their understandings. These are the steps through which one passes to the unenviable lees of life !

I am very sorry for the state of poor lady B * * *. It presages ill. She had a prospect of long happiness. Opium is a very false friend.

I will get you Bougainville's book.¹—I think it is on the Falkland Isles, for it cannot be on those just discovered ; but as I set out to-morrow se'nnight, and probably may have no opportunity sooner of sending it, I will bring it myself. Adieu !

Yours ever.

¹ Walpole was right in his conjecture. An English translation of the book appeared in 1773, under the title—"History of a Voyage to the Malouine, or Falkland Islands, made in 1763 and 1764, under the command of M. de Bougainville ; and of two Voyages to the Straights of Magellan, with an account of the Patagonians. Translated from Don Pernetý's Historical Journal, written in French."

In the same year was published, Lewis de Bougainville's Voyage round the World, between 1766—1769. London, 4to. 1773. This distinguished navigator, whose merits have only been eclipsed by those of captain Cook, was killed by the mob of Paris on the fatal 10th August 1792. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Paris, August 12, 1771.

DEAR SIR,

I am excessively shocked at reading in the papers that Mr. Gray is dead! I wish to God you may be able to tell me it is not true! Yet in this painful uncertainty I must rest some days! None of my acquaintance are in London—I do not know to whom to apply but to you—alas! I fear in vain! Too many circumstances speak it true!—the detail is exact;—a second paper arrived by the same post, and does not contradict it—and, what is worse, I saw him but four or five days before I came hither; he had been to Kensington for the air, complained of the gout flying about him, of sensations of it in his stomach: I, indeed, thought him changed, and that he looked ill—still I had not the least idea of his being in danger—I started up from my chair when I read the paragraph—a cannon ball would not have surprised me more! The shock but ceased, to give way to my concern, and my hopes are too ill-founded to mitigate it! If nobody has the charity to write to me, my anxiety must continue till the end of the month, for I shall set out on my return on the 26th; and unless you receive this time enough for your answer to leave London on the 20th, in the evening, I cannot meet it till I find it in Arlington-street, whither I beg you to direct it.

If the event is but too true, pray add to this melancholy service that of telling me any circumstance you know of his death. Our long, very long friendship, and his genius, must endear to me every thing that relates to him. What writings has he left? Who are his executors? I should earnestly wish, if he has destined any thing to the public, to print it at my press—it would do me honour, and would give me an opportunity of expressing what I feel for him. Methinks, as we grow old, our only business here is to adorn the graves of our friends, or to dig our own! Adieu, dear sir. Yours ever.

P.S. I heard this unhappy news but last night; and have just been told that lord Edward Bentinck goes in haste to-morrow to England; so that you will receive this much sooner than I expected: still I must desire you to direct to Arlington-street, as by far the surest conveyance to me.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Paris, August 25, 1771.

I HAVE passed my biennial six weeks here, my dear lord, and am preparing to return as soon as the weather will allow me. It is some comfort to the patriot virtue, envy, to find this climate worse than our own. There were four very hot days at the end of last month, which, you know, with us northern people compose a summer: it has rained half this, and for these three days there has been a deluge, a storm, and extreme cold. Yet these folks shiver in silk, and sit with their windows open till supper-time.—Indeed, firing is very dear, and nabobs very scarce. Economy and retrenchment are the words in fashion, and are founded in a little more than caprice. I have heard no instance of luxury but in mademoiselle Guimard, a favourite dancer, who is building a palace: round the *salle à manger* there are windows that open upon hot-houses, that are to produce flowers all winter. That is worthy of * * * * *. There is a finer dancer, whom Mr. H * * * * is to transplant to London; a mademoiselle Heinel or Ingle, a Fleming. She is tall, perfectly made, very handsome, and has a set of attitudes copied from the classics. She moves as gracefully slow as Pygmalion's statue when it was coming to life, and moves her leg round as imperceptibly as if she was dancing in the zodiac.—But she is not Virgo.

They make no more of breaking parliaments here than an English mob does of breaking windows. It is pity people are so ill-sorted. If this king and ours could cross over and figure in, Louis XV. would dissolve our parliament if Polly Jones did but say a word to him. They have got into such a habit of it here, that you would think a parliament was a polypus: they cut it in two, and by next morning half of it becomes a whole assembly. This has literally been the case at Besançon.¹ Lord and lady Barrymore, who are in the highest favour at Compeigne, will be able to carry over the receipt.

¹ The parliaments of Besançon, Bourdeaux, Toulouse and Britany, were in succession totally suppressed by Louis XV. New courts were assembled in their stead, most of the former members being sent into banishment. [Ed.]

Every body feels in their own way. My grief is to see the ruinous condition of the palaces and pictures. I was yesterday at the Louvre. Le Brun's noble gallery, where the battles of Alexander are, and of which he designed the ceiling, and even the shutters, bolts, and locks, is in a worse condition than the old gallery at Somerset-house. It rains in upon the pictures, though there are stores of much more valuable pieces than those of Le Brun. Heaps of glorious works by Raphael and all the great masters are piled up and equally neglected at Versailles. Their care is not less destructive in private houses. The duke of Orleans' pictures and the prince of Monaco's have been cleaned, and varnished so thick that you may see your face in them; and some of them have been transported from board to cloth, bit by bit, and the seams filled up with colour; so that in ten years they will not be worth sixpence. It makes me as peevish as if I was posterity! I hope your lordship's works will last longer than these of Louis XIV. The glories of his *siècle* hasten fast to their end, and little will remain but those of his authors.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Sept. 7, 1771.

I ARRIVED yesterday, within an hour or two after you was gone, which mortified me exceedingly: Lord knows when I shall see you. You are so active and so busy, and cast bullets and build bridges, are pontifex maximus, and, like sir John Thorold or Cimon,

———— triumph over land and wave,

that one can never get a word with you. Yet I am very well worth a general's or a politician's ear. I have been deep in all the secrets of France, and confidant of some of the principals of both parties. I know what is, and is to be, though I am neither priest nor conjurer—and have heard a vast deal about breaking carabiniers and grenadiers; though, as usual, I dare to say I shall give a woful account of both. The worst part is, that by the most horrid oppression and injustice their finances will very soon be in good order—unless some bankrupt turns Ravallac, which

will not surprise me. The horror the nation has conceived of the king and chancellor,¹ makes it probable that the latter, at least, will be sacrificed. He seems not to be without apprehension, and has removed from the king's library a MS. trial of a chancellor who was condemned to be hanged under Charles VII.—For the king, *qui a fait ses épreuves*, and not to his honour, you will not wonder that he lives in terrors.

I have executed all lady Ailesbury's commissions; but mind, I do not commission you to tell her, for you would certainly forget it.

As you will, no doubt, come to town to report who burnt Portsmouth, I will meet you here, if I am apprized of the day. Your niece's marriage² pleases me extremely. Though I never saw him till last night, I know a great deal of her future husband, and like his character. His person is much better than I expected, and far preferable to many of the fine young moderns. He is better than Sir * * *, at least as well as the duke of * * * *, and Adonis compared to the charming Mr. * * * *. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 10, 1771.

HOWEVER melancholy the occasion is, I can but give you a thousand thanks, dear sir, for the kind trouble you have taken, and the information you have given me about poor Mr. Gray. I received your first letter at Paris; the last I found at my house in town, where I arrived only on Friday last. The circumstance of the professor refusing to rise in the night and visit him, adds to the shock. Who is that true professor of physic? Jesus! is their absence to murder as well as their presence?

I have not heard from Mr. Mason, but I have written to him. Be so good as to tell the master at Pembroke, though I have not the honour of knowing him, how sensible I am of his proposed attention to me, and how much I feel for him in losing a friend

¹ Maupou. ¶ Ravaillac was the assassin by whose hand Henri Quatre fell, at the moment when he was taking up arms against Austria. [Ed.]

² The marriage of lady Gertrude Seymour Conway to lord Villiers, afterwards earl of Grandison. [Or.]

of so excellent a genius. Nothing will allay my own concern like seeing any of his compositions that I have not yet seen. It is buying even them too dear—but when the author is irreparably lost, the produce of his mind is the next best possession. I have offered my press to Mr. Mason, and hope it will be accepted.

Many thanks for the cross, dear sir; it is precisely what I wished. I hope you and Mr. Essex preserve your resolution of passing a few days here between this and Christmas. Just at present, I am not my own master, having stepped into the middle of a sudden match in my own family. Lord Hertford is going to marry his third daughter to lord Villiers, son of lady Grandison, the present wife of sir Charles Montagu. We are all felicity, and in a round of dinners—I am this minute returned from Beaumont-lodge at old Windsor, where sir *Charles Grandison* lives. I will let you know, if the papers do not, when our festivities are subsided.

I shall receive with gratitude from Mr. Tyson either drawing or etching of our departed friend, but wish not to have it inscribed to me, as it is an honour more justly due to Mr. Stonehewer. If the master of Pembroke will accept a copy of a small picture I have of Mr. Gray, painted soon after the publication of the Ode on Eton, it shall be at his service—and after his death I beg it may be bequeathed to his college.

Adieu.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 12, 1771.

DEAR SIR,

As our wedding will not be so soon as I expected, and as I should be unwilling you should take a journey in bad weather, I wish it may be convenient to you and Mr. Essex to come hither on the 25th day of this present month. If one can depend on any season, it is on the *chill suns* of October, which, like an elderly beauty, are less capricious than spring or summer. Our old-fashioned October, you know, reached eleven days into modern November, and I still depend on that reckoning, when I have a mind to protract the year.

Lord Ossory is charmed with Mr. Essex's cross,¹ and wishes much to consult him on the proportions. Lord Ossory has taken a small house very near mine, is now, and will be here again, after Newmarket. He is determined to erect it at Ampthill, and I have written the following lines to record the reason :

In days of old here Ampthill's towers were seen,
 The mournful refuge of an injured queen.
 Here flow'd her pure, but unavailing tears ;
 Here blinded zeal sustain'd her sinking years.
 Yet freedom hence her radiant banners waved,
 And love avenged a realm by priests enslaved.
 From Catherine's wrongs a nation's bliss was spread,
 And Luther's light from Henry's lawless bed.

I hope the satire on Henry VIII. will make you excuse the compliment to Luther, which, like most poetic compliments, does not come from my heart. I only like him better than Henry, Calvin, and the church of Rome, who were bloody persecutors. Calvin was an execrable villain, and the worst of all ; for he copied those whom he pretended to correct. Luther was as jovial as Wilkes, and served the cause of liberty without canting.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 23, 1751.

I AM sorry, dear sir, that I cannot say your answer is as agreeable and entertaining as you flatter me my letter was ; but consider, you are prevented coming to me, and have flying pains of rheumatism—either were sufficient to spoil your letter.

I am sure of being here till to-morrow se'nnight, the last of this month ; consequently I may hope to see Mr. Essex here on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday next. After that I cannot answer for myself, on account of our wedding, which depends on the return of a courier from Ireland. If I can command any days certain in November, I will give you notice ; and yet I shall have a scruple of dragging you so far from home at such a season.

¹ Mr. Cole had applied to Mr. Essex, who furnished a design for the cross, which was followed. [Or.]

I will leave it to your option, only begging you to be assured that I shall always be most happy to see you.

I am making a very curious purchase at Paris, the complete armour of Francis the first. It is gilt in relief, and is very rich and beautiful. It comes out of the Crozat collection. I am building a small chapel, too, in my garden, to receive two valuable pieces of antiquity, and which have been presents singularly lucky for me. They are the window from Bexhill, with the portraits of Henry III., and his queen, procured for me by lord Ashburnham. The other, great part of the tomb of Capoccio, mentioned in my *Anecdotes of Painting* on the subject of the confessor's shrine, and sent to me from Rome by Mr. Hamilton, our minister at Naples. It is very extraordinary that I should happen to be master of these curiosities. After next summer, by which time my castle and collection will be complete (for if I buy more, I must build another castle for another collection), I propose to form another catalogue and description, and shall take the liberty to call on you for your assistance. In the mean time there is enough new to divert you at present.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Late Strawberry-hill, January 7, 1772.

You have read of my calamity without knowing it, and will pity me when you do. I have been blown up; my castle is blown up; Guy Fawkes has been about my house; and the fifth of November has fallen on the 6th of January! In short, nine thousand powder-mills broke loose yesterday morning on Hounslow-heath;¹ a whole squadron of them came hither, and have broken eight of my painted-glass windows; and the north side of the castle looks as if it had stood a siege. The two saints in the hall have suffered martyrdom! they have had their bodies cut off, and nothing remains but their heads. The two next great sufferers are indeed two of the least valuable, being the passage-

¹ Three powder-mills blew up on Hounslow Heath on the 6th January 1772, when such was the violence of the explosion that it was felt not only in the metropolis, but even as far as Glo'ster; and was very generally mistaken for the shock of an earthquake. [Ed.]

windows to the library and great parlour—a fine pane is demolished in the round room; and the window by the gallery is damaged. Those in the cabinet, and Holbein-room, and gallery, and blue-room, and green-closet, &c. have escaped. As the storm came from the north-west, the china-closet was not touched, nor a cup fell down. The bow-window of brave old coloured glass, at Mr. Hindley's, is massacred; and all the north sides of Twickenham and Brentford are shattered. At London, it was proclaimed an earthquake, and half the inhabitants ran into the street.

As lieutenant-general of the ordnance, I must beseech you to give strict orders that no more powder-mills may blow up. My aunt, Mrs. Kerwood, reading one day in the papers that a distiller's had been burnt by the head of the still flying off, said, she wondered they did not make an act of parliament against the heads of stills flying off. Now, I hold it much easier for you to do a body this service; and would recommend to your consideration, whether it would not be prudent to have all magazines of powder kept under water till they are wanted for service. In the mean time, I expect a pension to make me amends for what I have suffered under the government. Adieu!

Yours, &c.

TO THE REV. MR COLE.

Arlington-street, Jan. 28, 1772.

It is long indeed, dear sir, since we corresponded. I should not have been silent if I had had any thing worth telling you in your way—but I grow such an antiquity myself, that I think I am less fond of what remains of our predecessors.

I thank you for Bannerman's proposal; I mean, for taking the trouble to send it, for I am not at all disposed to subscribe. I thank you more for the note on king Edward; I mean, too, for your friendship in thinking of me. Of dean Milles I cannot trouble myself to think any more. His piece is at Strawberry: perhaps I may look at it for the sake of your note. The bad weather keeps me in town, and a good deal at home, which I find very comfortable, literally practising what so many persons

pretend they intend, being quiet and enjoying my fire-side in my elderly days.

Mr. Mason has shewn me the relics of poor Mr. Gray. I am sadly disappointed at finding them so very inconsiderable. He always persisted, when I inquired about his writings, that he had nothing by him. I own I doubted. I am grieved he was so very near exact—I speak of my own satisfaction; as to his genius, what he published during his life will establish his fame as long as our language lasts, and there is a man of genius left. There is a silly fellow, I do not know who, that has published a volume of letters on the English nation, with characters of our modern authors. He has talked such nonsense on Mr. Gray, that I have no patience with the compliments he has paid me. He must have an excellent taste! and gives me a woful opinion of my own trifles, when he likes them, and cannot see the beauties of a poet that ought to be ranked in the first line.

I am more humbled by any applause in the present age, than by hosts of such critics as dean Milles. Is not Garrick reckoned a tolerable author, though he has proved how little sense is necessary to form a great actor? His Cymon, his prologues and epilogues, and forty such pieces of trash, are below mediocrity, and yet delight the mob in the boxes as well as in the footman's gallery. I do not mention the things written in his praise, because he writes most of them himself. But you know any one popular merit can confer all merit. Two women talking of Wilkes, one said he squinted—t'other replied, "Squints!—well, if he does, it is not more than a man should squint." For my part, I can see how extremely well Garrick acts, without thinking him six feet high. It is said Shakspeare was a bad actor; why do not his divine plays make our wise judges conclude that he was a good one? they have not a proof of the contrary, as they have in Garrick's works—but what is it to you or me what he is? We may see him act with pleasure, and nothing obliges us to read his writings.¹

¹ The best defence of Garrick against the charges which Walpole so constantly brings against him, will be found in the estimation in which he was held by the most distinguished of his contemporaries; and in the strong common sense which distinguished his character. See the Garrick Correspondence—*passim*. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, June 9, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

The preceding paper¹ was given me by a gentleman, who has a better opinion of my bookhood than I deserve. I could give him no satisfaction, but told him, I would get inquiry made at Cambridge for the pieces he wants. If you can give me any assistance in this chase, I am sure you will: as it will be trouble enough, I will not make my letter longer.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 17, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

You are a mine that answers beyond those of Peru. I have given the treasures you sent me to the gentleman from whom I had the queries. He is vastly obliged to you, and I am sure so am I, for the trouble you have given yourself, and, therefore, I am going to give you more. King Edward's Letters are printed.¹ Shall I keep them for you or send them, and how? I intend you four copies—shall you want more? Lord Ossory takes a hundred, and I have as many; but none will be sold.

I am out of materials for my press. I am thinking of printing some numbers of miscellaneous MSS. from my own and Mr. Gray's collection. If you have any among your stories that are historic, new and curious, and like to have them printed, I shall be glad of them. Among Gray's are letters of sir Thomas Wyat the elder.² I am sure you must have a thousand hints about

¹ This letter enclosed some queries from a gentleman abroad, respecting books, &c. relating to the order of Malta. [Or.]

¹ "Copies of seven original letters from king Edward VI. to Barnaby Fitzpatrick." Strawberry-hill, 1772. 4to. [Ed.]

² The poet. He was the contemporary and friend of Surrey, and was accused by Henry VIII. of being the paramour of Anne Boleyn; but, his suspicion dying away, was, after witnessing several changes in that monarch's disposition towards him, appointed, in 1537, Henry's ambassador to the emperor. His poems have recently been published in the "Aldine Poets;" and in the Biographical Preface to them are included some of his admirable letters. [Ed.]

him. If you will send them to me I will do you justice, as you will see I have in King Edward's Letters. Do you know any thing of his son, the insurgent, in queen Mary's reign? ³

I do not know whether it was not to Payne the bookseller, but I am sure I gave somebody a very few notes to the British Topography. They were indeed of very little consequence.

I have got to-day, and am reading with entertainment, two vols. in 8vo., the lives of Leland, Hearne, and Antony Wood.⁴ I do not know the author, but he is of Oxford. I think you should add that of your friend Brown Willis.⁵ There is a queer piece on Free-masonry in one of the volumes, said to be written, on very slender authority, by Henry VI., with notes by Mr. Locke: a very odd conjunction!—It says that Arts were brought from the East by Peter Gower. As I am sure you will not find an account of this singular person in all your collections, be it known to you, that Peter Gower was commonly called Pythagoras. I remember our newspapers insisting, that Thomas Kouli Kan was an Irishman, and that his true name was Thomas Callaghan.

On reading over my letter, I find I am no sceptic, having affirmed no less than four times, that I *am sure*. Though this is extremely awkward, I *am sure* I will not write my letter over again; so pray excuse or burn my tautology.

Yours ever.

P.S. I had like to have forgotten the most obliging, and to me the most interesting part of your letter—your kind offer of coming hither. I accept it most gladly; but, for reasons I will

³ Sir Thomas Wyatt, 'the younger,' son of the preceding, who is presumed to have received that designation from having been knighted in the lifetime of his father. Having joined in the effort to place lady Jane Grey on the throne, he was condemned and executed for high treason, on the 11th April 1554. [Ed.]

⁴ The editor was W. Huddersford, who had published at Oxford, in 1761, "Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Viri Clarissimi Antonii a Wood." [Ed.]

⁵ Browne Willis, esq., LL.D., the antiquary and author of "A Survey of the Cathedrals of England;" "Notitia Parliamentaria," &c. He was born at Blandford in 1682, and died in February 1760. Dr. Ducarel printed privately, immediately after his death, a small quarto pamphlet, entitled, "*Some Account of Browne Willis, Esq., LL.D.*" One of Willis's peculiarities was his fondness for visiting cathedrals on the saints' days to which they were dedicated. [Ed.]

tell you, wish it may be deferred a little. I am going to Park-place (general Conway's), then to Ampthill (lord Ossory's), and then to Goodwood (duke of Richmond's); and the beginning of August to Wentworth-castle (marquis of Rockingham's); so that I shall not be at all settled here till the end of the latter month. But I have a stronger reason. By that time will be finished a delightful chapel I am building in my garden, to contain the shrine of Capoccio, and the window with Henry III. and his queen. My new bed-chamber will be finished, too, which is now all in litter: and, besides, September is a quiet month; visits to make or receive are over, and the troublesome go to shoot partridges. If that time suits you, pray assure me I shall see you on the first of September.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Monday, June 22, 1772.

It is lucky that I have had no dealings with Mr. F * * * ; for, if he had ruined me, as he has half the world, I could not have *run* away. I tired myself with walking on Friday; the gout came on Saturday in my foot; yesterday I kept my bed till four o'clock, and my room all day—but, with wrapping myself all over with bootikins, I have scarce had any pain—my foot swelled immediately, and to-day I am descended into the blueth and green¹; and though you expect to find that I am paving the way to an excuse, I think I shall be able to be with you on Saturday. All I intend to excuse myself from, is walking. I should certainly never have the gout, if I had lost the use of my feet. Cherubims that have no legs, and do nothing but stick their chins in a cloud and sing, are never out of order.² Exercise is the worst thing in the world, and as bad an invention as gunpowder.

¹ Cant words of Mr. Walpole's for blue and green. [Or.]

² A want of legs is not the only deficiency under which the cherubims labour, according to the capital story told of St. Cecilia. That saint was one day singing and playing on the organ, when the chapel was suddenly filled with cherubims, who kept fluttering round her as long as she continued

A-propos to Mr. F * * *, here is a passage ridiculously applicable to him, that I met with yesterday in the letters of Guy Patin : “ Il n’y a pas long-temps qu’un auditeur des comptes nommé Mons. Nivelles fit banqueroute ; et tout fraîchement, c’est-à-dire depuis trois jours, un trésorier des parties casuelles, nommé Sanson, en a fait autant ; et pour vous montrer, qu’il est vrai que *res humanæ faciunt circulum*, comme il a été autrefois dit par Plato et par Aristote, celui-là s’en retourne d’où il vient. Il est fils d’un paysan ; il a été laquais de son premier métier, et aujourd’hui il n’est plus rien, si non qu’il lui reste une assez belle femme.”——I do not think I can find in Patin or Plato, nay, nor in Aristotle, though he wrote about every thing, a parallel case to * * * * *’s : there are advertised to be sold more annuities of his and his society, to the amount of five hundred thousand pounds a-year ! I wonder what he will do next, when he has sold the estates of all his friends !

I have been reading the most delightful book in the world, the lives of Leland, Tom Hearne, and Antony Wood. The last’s diary makes a thick volume in octavo. One entry is, “ This day Old Joan began to make my bed.” In the story of Leland is an examination of a free-mason, written by the hand of king Henry VI., with notes by Mr. Locke. Free-masonry, Henry VI., and Locke, make a strange heterogeneous olio ; but that is not all. The respondent, who defends the mystery of masonry, says it was brought into Europe by the Venetians—he means the Phœnicians.—And who do you think propagated it ? Why, one Peter Gore—And who do you think that was ?—One Pythagoras, Pythagore.—I do not know whether it is not still more extraordinary, that this and the rest of the nonsense in that account made Mr. Locke determine to be a free-mason : so would I too, if I could expect to hear of more *Peter Gores*.

Pray tell lady Lyttelton that I say she will certainly kill herself if she lets lady Ailesbury drag her twice a-day to feed the pheasants ; and you make her climb cliffs and clamber over mountains. She has a tractability that alarms me for her ; and

her tuneful devotions. The saint, apprehensive that they must be tired from the length of time which they had been poisoning themselves on their downy wings, addressed them with—“ Asseyez vous, mes enfans ;” to which she received for answer, “ Merci, madame, merci, mais nous n’avons pas *de quoi*.” [Ed.]

if she does not pluck up a spirit and determine never to be put out of her own way, I do not know what may be the consequence. I will come and set her an example of immovability. Take notice, I do not say one civil syllable to lady Ailesbury. She has not passed a whole day here these two years. She is always very gracious, says she will come when *you* will fix a time, as if *you* governed, and then puts it off whenever it is proposed, nor will spare one single day from Park-place—as if other people were not as partial to their own Park-places. Adieu!

Yours ever.

Tuesday noon.

I WROTE my letter last night; this morning I received yours, and shall wait till Sunday, as you bid me, which will be more convenient for my gout, though not for other engagements; but I shall obey the superior, as *nullum tempus occurrit regi et podagræ*.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

June 23, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

As I am getting into my chaise I received your packet, for which I have only time to give you a thousand thanks. I have sent you six copies,¹ and have left orders for Dr. Glynn and his friends to see my house; but I fear it will be to great disadvantage, for my housekeeper is very ill, and there will only be a maid that can tell them nothing.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 7, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

I sent you last week by the Cambridge Fly, that puts up in Gray's-inn-lane, six copies of King Edward's Letters, but fear I forgot to direct their being left at Mr. Bentham's, by which neglect perhaps you have not yet got them; so that I

¹ Of King Edward's Letters. [Or.]

have been very blameable, while I thought I was very expeditious; and it was not till reading your letter again just now that I discovered my carelessness.

I have not heard of Dr. Glynn, &c., but the housekeeper has orders to receive them. I thank you a thousand times for the Maltese notes, which I have given to the gentleman, and for the Wyattiana: I am going to work on the latter.

I have not yet seen Mr. Gray's print, but am glad it is so like. I expected Mr. Mason would have sent me one easily, but I suppose he keeps it for me, as I shall call on him in my way to lord Strafford's.

Mr. West,¹ one of our brother antiquaries, is dead. He had a very curious collection of old pictures, English coins, English prints, and manuscripts. But he was so rich, that I take for granted nothing will be sold. I could wish for his family pictures of Henry V. and Henry VIII.

Foote, in his new comedy of the Nabob, has lashed master doctor Milles and our Society very deservedly for the nonsensical discussion they had this winter about Whittington and his cat. Few of them are fit for any thing better than such researches.

Poor Mr. Granger has been very ill, but is almost recovered. I intend to invite him to meet you in September. It is a party I shall be very impatient for: you know how sincerely I am,

Dear sir,

Your obliged and obedient humble servant.

P.S. Pray tell me who the Cardinal was, whose lectures Ant. Wood says sir T. Wyat went to Oxford to hear. In my edition the column is 56, not 51, as in your letter. I have not Hearne's Langtoft:² if there is any fact in Hearne's notes relating to sir Thomas, be so good as to transcribe it.

¹ James West, esq., secretary of the treasury; and a distinguished Bibliomaniac. [Ed.]

² Peter Langtoft was an Augustine canon, of the monastery of Bridlington, in Yorkshire, and the author of a French Metrical Chronicle, in five books, beginning with Cadwallader, and ending with Edward I.; the greater portion of which was translated by Robert de Brunne, and forms the second part of his Chronicle; and this it is which Hearne published at Oxford in 1725, in 2 vols. 8vo., under the title of "Peter Langtoft's Chronicle." [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 28, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

I am anew obliged to you, as I am perpetually, for the notice you give me of another intended publication against me in the *Archæologia*, or *Old Woman's Logic*. By your account, the author will add much credit to their Society! For my part, I shall take no notice of any of his *handycrafts*. However, as there seems to be a willingness to carp at me, and as gnats may on a sudden provoke one to give a slap, I choose to be at liberty to say what I think of the learned Society; and therefore I have taken leave of them, having so good an occasion presented as their council on Whittington and his cat, and the ridicule that Foote has thrown on them. They are welcome to say any thing on my writings, but that they are the works of a fellow of so foolish a Society.

I am at work on the life of sir Thomas Wyat, but it does not please me; nor will it be entertaining, though you have contributed so many materials towards it. You must take one trouble more:—it is to inquire and search for a book that I want to see. It is the *Pilgrim*; was written by William Thomas, who was executed in queen Mary's time; but the book was printed under, and dedicated to Edward VI. I have only an imperfect memorandum of it, and cannot possibly recal to mind from whence I made it. All I think I remember, is, that the book was in the king's library. I have sent to the Museum to inquire after it; but I cannot find it mentioned in Ames's *History of English Printers*. Be so good as to ask all your antiquarian friends if they know such a work.

Amidst all your kindness, you have added one very disagreeable paragraph:—I mean, you doubt about coming here in September. Fear of a sore throat would be a reason for your never coming. It is one of the distempers in the world the least to be foreseen, and September, a dry month, one of the least likely months to bring it. I do not like your recurring to so very ill-founded an excuse, and positively will not accept it, unless you wish I should not be so much as I am,

Dear sir,

Your most faithful humble servant.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, August 25, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your notices, dear sir, and will deliver you from the trouble of any further pursuit of the Peleryne of Thomas. I have discovered him among the Cottonian MSS. in the Museum, and am to see him.

If Dr. Browne is returned to Cambridge, may I beg you to give him a thousand thanks for the present he left at my house, a goar-stone, and a seal, that belonged to Mr. Gray. I shall lay them up in my cabinet at Strawberry among my most valuables. Dr. Browne, however, was not quite kind to me; for he left no direction where to find him in town, so that I could not wait upon him, nor invite him to Strawberry-hill, as I much wished to do.

Do not these words, *invite him to Strawberry*, make your ears tingle? September is at hand, and you must have no sore-throat. The new chapel in the garden is almost finished, and you must come to the dedication.

I have seen Lincoln and York, and, to say the truth, prefer the former in some respects. In truth I was scandalized in the latter. William of Hatfield's tomb and figure is thrown aside into a hole; and yet the chapter possess an estate that his mother gave them. I have charged Mr. Mason¹ with my anathema, unless they do justice. I saw Roche abbey, too, which is hid in such a venerable chasm, that you might lie concealed there even from a 'squire parson of the parish. Lord Scarborough, to whom it belongs, and who lives at next door, neglects it as much as if he was afraid of ghosts. I believe Montesino's cave lay in just such a solemn thicket, which is now so over-grown, that, when one finds the spot, one can scarce find the ruins.

I forgot to tell you, that in the screen of York Minster there are most curious statues of the kings of England, from the Conqueror to Henry VI.; very singular, evidently by two different hands, the one better than the other, and most of them, I am persuaded, very authentic. Richard II., Henry III., and Henry V.,

¹ Mason was a residentiary of York Cathedral; as well as prebendary of Duffield, and rector of Aston. [Ed.]

I am sure are ; and Henry IV., though unlike the common portrait at Hampton-court, in Herefordshire, the most singular and villainous countenance I ever saw. I intend to try to get them well engraved. That old fool, James I., is crowded in, in the place of Henry VI., that was taken away to make room for this piece of flattery. For the chapter did not slight live princes.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, August 28, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

Your repentance is much more agreeable than your sin, and will cancel it whenever you please. Still I have a fellow-feeling for the indolence of age, and have myself been writing an excuse this instant for not accepting an invitation above three-score miles off. One's limbs, when they grow old, will not go any where, when they do not like it. If yours should find themselves in a more pliant humour, you are always sure of being welcome here, let the fit of motion come when it will.

Pray what is become of that figure you mention of Henry VII., which the destroyers, not the builders, have rejected ? and which the antiquaries, who know a man by his crown better than by his face, have rejected likewise ? The latter put me in mind of characters in comedies, in which a woman disguised in man's habit, and whose features her very lover does not know, is immediately acknowledged by pulling off her hat, and letting down her hair, which her lover had never seen before. I should be glad to ask Dr. Milles, if he thinks the crown of England was always made, like a quart pot, by Winchester measure ? If Mr. Tyson has made a print from that little statue, I trust he will give me one ; and if he, or Mr. Essex, or both, will accompany you hither, I shall be glad to see them.

At Buckden, in the bishop's palace,¹ I saw a print of Mrs. Newcome : I suppose the late mistress of St. John's. Can you tell me where I can procure one ? Mind, I insist that you do not serve me as you have often done, and send me your own, if you have one. I seriously will not accept it, nor ever trust you again.

¹ Bugden, in Huntingdonshire, where the episcopal palace of the bishop of Lincoln is situated. [Ed.]

On the staircase, in the same palace, there is a picture of two young men, in the manner of Vandyck, not at all ill done: do you know who they are, or does any body? There is a worse picture, in a large room, of some lads, which, too, the housemaid did not know. Adieu! dear sir, yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 7th, 1772.

DEAR SIR,

I did receive the print of Mrs. Newcome, for which I am extremely obliged to you, with a thousand other favours, and should certainly have thanked you for it long ago, but I was then, and am now, confined to my bed with the gout in every limb, and in almost every joint. I have not been out of my bedchamber these five weeks to-day; and last night the pain returned violently into one of my feet; so that I am now writing to you in a most uneasy posture, which will oblige me to be very short.

Your letter, which I suppose was left at my house in Arlington-street by Mr. Essex, was brought to me this morning. I am exceedingly sorry for his disappointment, and for his coming without writing first, in which case I might have prevented his journey. I do not know, even, whither to send to him, to tell him how impossible it is for me just now, in my present painful and hopeless situation, to be of any use to him. I am so weak and faint, I do not see even my nearest relations, and God knows how long it will be before I am able to bear company, much less application. I have some thoughts, as soon as I am able, of removing to Bath; so that I cannot guess when it will be in my power to consider duly Mr. Essex's plan with him. I shall undoubtedly, if ever I am capable of it, be ready to give him my advice, such as it is; or to look over his papers, and even to correct them, if his modesty thinks me more able to polish them than he is himself. At the same time, I must own, I think he will run too great a risk by the expense. The engravers in London are now arrived at such a pitch of exorbitant imposition,

that, for my own part, I have laid aside all thoughts of having a single plate more done.

Dear sir, pray tell Mr. Essex how concerned I am for his mischance, and for the total impossibility I am under of seeing him now. I can write no more, but shall be glad to hear from you on his return to Cambridge: and, when I am recovered, you may be assured how glad I shall be to talk his plan over with him. I am his and

Your obliged humble servant.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

I HAVE had a relapse, and not been able to use my hand, or I should have lamented with you on the plunder of your prints by that Algerine hog.¹ I pity you, dear sir, and feel for your awkwardness, that was struck dumb at his rapaciousness. The beast has no sort of taste neither—and in a twelvemonth will sell them again. I regret particularly one print, which I dare to say he seized, that I gave you, Gertrude More; I thought I had another, and had not; and, as you liked it, I never told you so. This Muley Moloch used to buy books, and now sells them. He has hurt his fortune, and ruined himself, to have a collection, without any choice of what it should be composed. It is the most underbred swine I ever saw; but I did not know it was so ravenous. I wish you may get paid any how; you see by my writing how difficult it is to me, and therefore will excuse my being short.

Yours ever.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

Arlington-street, Dec. 20, 1772.

INDEED, madam, I want you and Mr. Conway in town. Christmas has dispersed all my company, and left nothing but a

¹ This letter may want some explanation. A gentleman, a collector of prints, and a neighbour of Mr. Walpole's, had just before requested to see Mr. Cole's collection, and on Mr. Cole's offering to accommodate him with such heads as he had not, he selected and took away no less than one hundred and eighty-seven of the most rare and valuable. [Or.]

loo-party or two. If all the fine days were not gone out of town, too, I should take the air in a morning ; but I am not yet nimble enough, like old Mrs. Nugent, to jump out of a post-chaise into an assembly.

You have a woful taste, my lady, not to like lord G***'s bon-mot. I am almost too indignant to tell you of a most amusing book in six volumes, called *Histoire philosophique et politique du commerce des deux Indes*.¹ It tells one every thing in the world ;—how to make conquests, invasions, blunders, settlements, bankruptcies, fortunes, &c. ; tells you the natural and historical history of all nations ; talks commerce, navigation, tea, coffee, china, mines, salt, spices ; of the Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, Danes, Spaniards, Arabs, Caravans, Persians, Indians, of Louis XIV. and the king of Prussia ; of la Bourdonnais, Dupleix, and admiral Saunders ; of rice, and women that dance * * ; of camels, gingams, and muslin ; of millions of millions of livres, pounds, rupees, and gouries ; of iron, cables, and Circassian women ; of law and the Mississippi ; and against all governments and religions. This and every thing else is in the two first volumes. I cannot conceive what is left for the four others. And all is so mixed, that you learn forty new trades, and fifty new histories, in a single chapter. There is spirit, wit, and clearness—and, if there were but less avoirdupois weight in it, it would be the richest book in the world in materials—but figures to me are so many cyphers, and only put me in mind of children that say, an hundred hundred hundred millions. However, it has made me learned enough to talk about Mr. Sykes and the secret committee,² which is all that any body talks of at present, and yet mademoiselle Heinel³ is arrived. This is all I know, and a great deal, too, considering I know nothing—and yet, were there either truth or lies, I should know them ; for one hears every thing in a sick room. Good night both !

¹ A work which has since been translated into all the languages of Europe. The author, the abbé Raynal, was born in 1712, and died at Paris in 1796. [Ed.]

² Upon East-Indian affairs. [Or.]

³ A celebrated danseuse. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Jan. 8, 1773.

IN return to your very kind inquiries, dear sir, I can let you know, that I am quite free from pain, and walk a little about my room, even without a stick: nay, have been four times to take the air in the park. Indeed, after fourteen weeks this is not saying much; but it is a worse reflection, that when one is subject to the gout, and far from young, one's worst account will probably be better than that after the next fit. I neither flatter myself on one hand, nor am impatient on the other—for will either do one any good? one must bear one's lot whatever it be.

I rejoice Mr. * * * * has justice,¹ though he had no bowels. How Gertrude More escaped him I do not guess. It will be wrong to rob you of her, after she has come to you through so many hazards—nor would I hear of it, either if you have a mind to keep her, or have not given up all thoughts of a collection since you have been visited by a Visigoth.

I am much more impatient to see Mr. Gray's print, than Mr. What-d'ye-call-him's answer to my historic doubts.² He may have made himself very angry; but I doubt whether he will make me at all so. I love antiquities; but I scarce ever knew an antiquary who knew how to write upon them. Their understandings seem as much in ruins as the things they describe. For the Antiquarian Society, I shall leave them in peace with Whittington and his cat. As my contempt for them has not, however, made me disgusted with what they do not understand, antiquities, I have published two numbers of Miscellanies, and they are very welcome to mumble them with their toothless gums. I want to send you these—not their gums, but my pieces, and a Grammont,³ of which I have printed only a hundred copies, and

¹ The gentleman that had carried off so many of Mr. Cole's prints. He had now fully remunerated Mr. Cole in a valuable present of books. [Or.]

² Mr. Master's pamphlet, printed at the expense of the Antiquarian Society in the second volume of the *Archæologia*. [Or.]

³ "Mémoires du Comte de Grammont, nouvelle édition, augmentée de Notes et Eclaircissemens nécessaires, par M. Horace Walpole." Strawberry-hill. 1772. 4to. [Ed.]

which will be extremely scarce, as twenty-five copies are gone to France. Tell me how I shall convey them safely.

Another thing you must tell me, if you can, is, if you know any thing ancient of the Free-masons. Governor Pownal,⁴ a Whittingtonian, has a mind they should have been a corporation erected by the popes.⁵ As you see what a good creature I am, and return good for evil, I am engaged to pick up what I can for him, to support this system, in which I believe no more than in the pope : and the work is to appear in a volume of the Society's pieces. I am very willing to oblige him, and turn my cheek, that they may smite that, also. Lord help them ! I am sorry they are such numsculls, that they almost make me think myself something ! but there are great authors enough to bring me to my senses again. Posterity, I fear, will class me with the writers of this age, or forget me with them, not rank with any names that deserve remembrance. If I cannot survive the Milles's, the What-d'ye-call-him's, and the compilers of catalogues of topography, it would comfort me very little to confute them. I should be as little proud of success as if I had carried a contest for churchwarden.

Not being able to return to Strawberry-hill, where all my books and papers are, and my printer lying fallow, I want some short bills to print. Have you any thing you wish printed ? I can either print a few to amuse ourselves, or, if very curious, and not too dry, could make a third number of *Miscellaneous Antiquities*.

I am not in any eagerness to see Mr. What-d'ye-call-him's pamphlet against me ; therefore pray give yourself no trouble to get it for me. The specimens I have seen of his writing take off all edge from curiosity. A print of Mr. Gray will be a real present. Would it not be dreadful to be commended by an age

⁴ Thomas Pownall, esq., the antiquary, and a constant contributor to the *Archæologia*, having been Governor of South Carolina and other American colonies, was always distinguished from his brother John, who was likewise an antiquary, by the title of Governor Pownall. [Ed.]

⁵ Probably the best account of Free-masonry which has been published in England,⁶ is that which was contributed to the *London Magazine* for 1824 by the English opium-eater (founded on a German work), in which it is clearly shown that masonry took its rise in this country, and that, too, so recently as the middle of the seventeenth century. [Ed.]

that had not taste enough to admire his odes? Is not it too great a compliment to me to be abused, too? I am ashamed! Indeed our antiquaries ought to like me. I am but too much on a par with them. Does not Mr. Henshaw come to London? Is he a professor, or only a lover of engraving? If the former, and he were to settle in town, I would willingly lend him heads to copy. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Feb. 18, 1773.

THE most agreeable ingredient of your last, dear sir, is the paragraph that tells me you shall be in town in April, when I depend on the pleasure of seeing you; but, to be certain, wish you would give me a few days' law, and let me know, too, where you lodge. Pray bring your books, though the continuation of the *Miscellaneous Antiquities* is uncertain. I thought the affectation of loving veteran anecdotes was so vigorous, that I ventured to print five hundred copies. One hundred and thirty only are sold. I cannot afford to make the town perpetual presents: though I find people exceedingly eager to obtain them when I do; and if they will not buy them, it is a sign of such indifference, that I shall neither bestow my time, or my cost, to no purpose. All I desire is, to pay the expenses, which I can afford much less than my idle moments. Not but the operations of my press have often turned against myself in many shapes. I have told people many things they did not know, and from fashion they have bought a thousand things out of my hands, which they do not understand, and only love *en passant*. At Mr. West's sale, I got literally nothing: his prints sold for the frantic sum of 1495*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.* Your and my good friend Mr. Gulston threw away above 200*l.* there.

I am not sorry Mr. Lort has recourse to the fountain-head: Mr. Pownal's system of Free-masonry is so absurd and groundless, that I am glad to be rid of intervention. I have seen the former once: he told me he was willing to sell his prints, as the value of them is so increased—for that very reason I did not want to purchase them.

Paul Sanby promised me ten days ago to shew Mr. Henshaw's engravings (which I received from Dr. Ewen) to Bartolozzi, and ask his terms, thinking he would delight in so very promising a scholar; but I have heard nothing since, and therefore fear there is no success. Let me however see the young man when he comes, and I will try if there is any other way of serving him.

What shall I say to you, dear sir, about Dr. Prescott? or what shall I say to him? It hurts me not to be very civil, especially as any respect to my father's memory touches me much more than any attention to myself, which I cannot hold to be a quarter so well founded. Yet how dare I write to a poor man, who may do, as I have lately seen done by a Scotch woman that wrote a play,¹ and printed lord Chesterfield's and lord Lyttelton's letters to her, as *Testimonia Auctorum*: I will therefore beg you to make my compliments and thanks to the master, and to make them as grateful as you please, provided I am dispensed with giving any certificate under my hand. You may plead my illness, which, though the fifth month ended yesterday, is far from being at an end. My relapses have been endless: I cannot yet walk a step: and a great cold has added an ague in my cheek, for which I am just going to begin the bark. The prospect for the rest of my days is gloomy. The case of my poor nephew still more deplorable: he arrived in town last night, and bore his journey tolerably—but his head is in much more danger of not recovering than his health; though they give us hopes of both. But the evils of life are not good subjects for letters—why afflict one's friends? Why make common-place reflections?

Adieu! yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 7, 1773.

I HAVE now seen the 2d vol. of the *Archæologia*, or *Old Woman's Logic*, with Mr. Master's Answer to me. If he had not taken such pains to declare it was written against my doubts, I should have thought it a defence of them; for the few facts

¹ Sir Harry Gaylove; or, *Comedy in Embryo*. [Or.]

he quotes make for my arguments, and confute himself; particularly in the case of lady Eleanor Butler; whom, by the way, he makes *marry* her own *nephew*, and not *descend* from her *own family*, because she was *descended* from her *grandfather*.

This Mr. Masters is an excellent Sanco Panza to such a Don Quixote as dean Milles! but enough of such goosecaps!

Pray thank Mr. Ashby for his admirable correction of sir Thomas Wyat's *bon-mot*. It is right beyond all doubt, and I will quote it if ever the piece is reprinted.

Mr. Tyson surprises me by usurping your Dissertation. It seems all is fish that comes to the net of the Society. Mercy on us! What a cart-load of brick and rubbish, and Roman ruins they have piled together! I have found nothing tolerable in the volume but the Dissertation of Mr. Masters; which is followed by an answer, that, like Masters's, contradicts him, without disproving any thing.

Mr. West's books are selling outrageously. His family will make a fortune by what he collected from stalls and Morefields. But I must not blame the virtuosi, having surpassed them. In short, I have bought his two pictures of Henry V.¹ and Henry VIII., and their families; the first of which is engraved in my Anecdotes, or, as the catalogue says, engraved by Mr. H. Walpole, and the second described there. The first cost me 38*l.*, and the last 84*l.*, though I knew Mr. West bought it for six guineas. But, in fact, these two, with my marriages of Henry VI. and VII., compose such a suite of the house of Lancaster, and enrich my Gothic house so completely, that I would not deny myself. The Henry VII. cost me as much, and is less curious: the price of antiquities is so exceedingly risen, too, at present, that I expected to have paid more. I have bought much cheaper at the same sale, a picture of Henry VIII. and Charles V. in one piece, both much younger than ever I saw any portrait of either.

I hope your pilgrimage to St. Gulaston's this month will take place, and that you will come and see them. Adieu!

¹ This picture, which is fully described in Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting, was originally an altar-piece at Shene, and afterwards in the Arundelian collection, and contains portraits, not only of Henry V., but also of his brothers, Thomas duke of Clarence, John duke of Bedford, Humphrey duke of Gloster, the queen, the king's sisters, Blanche duchess of Bavaria, and Philippa queen of Denmark, and two other ladies. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 27, 1773.

I HAD not time this morning to answer your letter by Mr. Essex, but I gave him the card you desired. You know, I hope, how happy I am to obey any orders of yours.

In the paper I shewed you in answer to Masters, you saw I was apprised of Rastel's Chronicle: but pray do not mention my knowing of it; because I draw so much from it, that I lie in wait, hoping that Milles, or Masters, or some of their fools, will produce it against me; and then I shall have another word to say to them, which they do not expect, since they think Rastel makes for them.

Mr. Gough¹ wants to be introduced to me! Indeed! I would see him, as he has been midwife to Masters; but he is so dull, that he would only be troublesome—and besides you know I shun authors, and would never have been one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company. They are always in earnest, and think their profession serious, and dwell upon trifles, and reverence learning. I laugh at all those things, and write only to laugh at them, and divert myself. None of us are authors of any consequence; and it is the most ridiculous of all vanities to be vain of being *mediocre*. A page in a great author humbles me to the dust, and the conversation of those that are not superior to myself, reminds me of what will be thought of myself. I blush to flatter them, or to be flattered by them, and should dread letters being published some time or other, in which they should relate our interviews, and we should appear like those puny conceited witlings in Shenstone's and Hugh's Correspondence, who give themselves airs from being in possession of the soil of Parnassus for the time being; as peers are proud, because they enjoy the estates of great men who went before them. Mr. Gough is very welcome to see Strawberry-hill; or I would help him to any scraps in my possession, that would assist his publications; though he is one of those industrious,

¹ Richard Gough, esq., author of the *British Topography*, and *The Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain*, and editor of *Camden's Britannia*, a learned and industrious antiquarian; born in 1735, died at Enfield 20th Feb. 1809. [Ed.]

who are only re-burying the dead—but I cannot be acquainted with him. It is contrary to my system, and my humour; and, besides, I know nothing of barrows, and Danish entrenchments, and Saxon barbarisms, and Phœnician characters—in short, I know nothing of those ages that knew nothing—then how should I be of use to modern literati? All the Scotch metaphysicians have sent me their works. I did not read one of them, because I do not understand what is not understood by those that write about it; and I did not get acquainted with one of the writers. I should like to be intimate with Mr. Anstey,² even though he wrote Lord Buckhorse, or with the author of the Heroic Epistle.³—I have no thirst to know the rest of my contemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith; though the latter changeling has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense, 'till he changed it for words, and sold it for a pension. Don't think me scornful. Recollect that I have seen Pope, and lived with Gray. Adieu!

Yours ever.

P.S. Mr. Essex has shewn me a charming drawing, from a charming round window at Lincoln. It has revived all my eagerness to have him continue his plan.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 4, 1773.

I SHOULD not have hurried to answer your letter, dear sir, the moment I receive it, but to send you another ticket¹ for your sister, in case she should not have recovered the other: and I think you said she was to stay but a fortnight in town. I would have sent it to her, had I known whither: and I have made it for five persons, in case she should have a mind to carry so many.

I am sorry for the young engraver; but I can by no means meddle with his going abroad, without the father's consent. It would be very wrong, and would hurt the young man essentially,

² Christopher Anstey, the lively author of the "New Bath Guide." [Ed.]

³ To Sir William Chambers. This well known satire has always been ascribed to Mason, although never acknowledged by him, nor inserted in his works. [Ed.]

¹ Of admission to Strawberry. [Or.]

if the father has any thing to leave. In any case, I certainly would not be accessary to sending away the son against the father's will. The father is an impertinent fool—but that you and I cannot help.

Pray be not uneasy about Gertrude More: I shall get the original; or, at least, a copy. Tell me how I shall send you martagons by the safest conveyance, or any thing else you want. I am always in your debt; and the apostle-spoon will make the debtor side in my book of gratitude run over.

Your public orator has done me too much honour by far—especially as he named me with my father,² to whom I am so infinitely inferior, both in parts and virtues. Though I have been abused undeservedly, I feel I have more title to censure than praise, and will subscribe to the former sooner than to the latter. Would not it be prudent to look upon the encomium as a funeral oration, and consider myself as dead? I have always dreaded out-living myself, and writing after what small talents I have should be decayed. Except the last volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting*, which has been finished and printed so long, and which, appear when they may, will still come too late for many reasons, I am disposed never to publish any more of my own self; but I do not say so positively, lest my breaking my intention should be but another folly. The gout has, however, made me so indolent and inactive, that if my head does not inform me how old I grow, at least my mind and my feet will—and can one have too many monitors of one's weakness?

I am sorry you think yourself so much inconvenienced by stirring from home. This is an *incommodity* by which your friends will suffer more than yourself, and nobody more sensibly than

Yours, &c.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington street, May 29, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

I have been so much taken up of late with poor lord Orford's affairs, that I have not had, and scarce have now, time to write you a line, and thank you for all your kindnesses,

² On presenting a relation of Mr. Walpole's to the vice-chancellor, for his honorary degree. [Or.]

informations, and apostle-spoon. I have not Newcomb's Repertorium, and shall be obliged to you for the transcript; not as doubting, but to confirm what Heaven, king Edward I., and the bishop of the Tartars, have deposed in favour of Malibrunus, the Jew-painter's abilities. I should sooner have suspected that Mr. Masters would have produced such witnesses to condemn Richard III. The note relating to lady Boteler does not relate to her marriage.

I send you two martagon roots, and some jonquils; and have added some prints, two enamelled pictures, and three medals. One of Oliver, by Simon; a fine one of Pope Clement X., and a scarce one of Archbishop Sancroft and the seven bishops. I hope the two latter will atone for the first. As I shall never be out of your debt, pray draw on me for any more other roots, or any thing that will be agreeable to you, and excuse me at present.

TO DR. BERKENHAUT.¹

July 6, 1773.

SIR,

I am so much engaged in private business at present, that I have not had time to thank you for the favour of your letter: nor can I now answer it to your satisfaction.

My life has been too insignificant to afford materials interesting to the public. In general, the lives of mere authors are dry and unentertaining; nor, though I have been one occasionally, are my writings of a class or merit to entitle me to any distinction. I can as little furnish you, sir, with a list of them or their dates, which would give me more trouble to make out than is worth while. If I have any merit with the public, it is for printing and preserving some valuable works of others; and if ever you write

¹ Dr. John Berkenhaut had been a captain both in the English and Prussian service, and in 1765 took his degree of M.D. at Leyden. His application to Walpole had been for the purpose of procuring materials for a life of him in his forthcoming work, the "*Biographia Literaria, or a Biographical History of Literature, containing the Lives of English, Irish, and Scottish Authors, from the dawn of Letters in these Kingdoms to the present Times.*" Vol. I., which treats of those writers who lived from the beginning of the fifth to the end of the sixth century, and which is the only volume ever published, appeared in 1777. Dr. Berkenhaut died 3d April 1791. [Ed.]

the lives of printers, I may be enrolled in the number. My own works, I suppose, are dead and buried; but, as I am not impatient to be interred with them, I hope you will leave that office to the parson of the parish, and I shall be, as long as I live,

Yours, &c.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, August 30, 1773.

I RETURNED last night from Houghton,¹ where multiplicity of business detained me four days longer than I intended, and where I found a scene infinitely more mortifying than I expected; though I certainly did not go with a prospect of finding a land flowing with milk and honey. Except the pictures, which are in the finest preservation, and the woods, which are become forests, all the rest is ruin, desolation, confusion, disorder, debts, mortgages, sales, pillage, villany, waste, folly, and madness. I do not believe that five thousand pounds would put the house and buildings into good repair. The nettles and brambles in the park are up to your shoulders; horses have been turned into the garden, and banditti lodged in every cottage. The perpetuity of livings that come up to the park-pales have been sold—and every farm let for half its value. In short, you know how much family-pride I have, and consequently may judge how much I have been mortified!—Nor do I tell you half, or *near* the worst circumstances. I have just stopped the torrent—and that is all. I am very uncertain whether I must not fling up the trust; and some of the difficulties in my way seem unsurmountable, and too dangerous not to alarm even my zeal; since I must not ruin myself, and hurt those for whom I must feel, too, only to restore a family that will end with myself, and to retrieve an estate, from which I am not likely ever to receive the least advantage.

If you will settle with the C * * * * s your journey to Chalfont, and will let me know the day, I will endeavour to meet you there; I hope it will not be till next week. I am overwhelmed with business—but, indeed, I know not when I shall be otherwise! I wish you joy of this endless summer.

¹ Where he had gone during the insanity of his nephew George, earl of Orford, to endeavour to settle and arrange his affairs. [Or.]

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 24, 1773.

THE multiplicity of business which I found chalked out to me by my journey to Houghton, has engaged me so much, my dear Lord, and the unpleasant scene opened to me there struck me so deeply, that I have neither had time nor cheerfulness enough to flatter myself I could amuse my friends by my letters. Except the pictures, I found every thing worse than I expected, and the prospect almost too bad to give me courage to pursue what I am doing. I am totally ignorant in most of the branches of business that are fallen to my lot, and not young enough to learn any new business well. All I can hope is to clear the worst part of the way; for, in undertaking to retrieve an estate, the beginning is certainly the most difficult of the work—it is fathoming a chaos. But I will not unfold a confusion to your lordship which your good sense will always keep you from experiencing—very unfashionably; for the first geniuses of this age hold, that the best method of governing the world is to throw it into disorder. The experiment is not yet complete, as the re-arrangement is still to come.

I am very seriously glad of the birth of your nephew,¹ my lord; I am going this evening with my congratulations; but have been so much absent and so hurried, that I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing lady Anne,² though I have called twice. To Gunnersbury I have had no summons this summer: I receive such honours, or the want of them, with proper respect. Lady * * *, I fear, is in chace of a *Dulcineus* that she will never meet. When the ardour of peregrination is a little abated, will not she probably give in to a more comfortable pursuit; and, like a print I have seen of the blessed martyr Charles I., abandon the hunt of a *corruptible* for that of an *incorruptible crown*? There is another beatific print just published in that style: it is of lady Huntingdon. With much pompous humility, she looks like an old basket-woman trampling on her coronet at the mouth of a cavern.—Poor Whitfield! if he was forced to do the honours of the *spelunca*!—Saint Fanny Shirley is nearer consecration. I was told two days ago that she had written a letter to lady Selina that was

¹ A son of John earl of Buckingham, who died young. [Or.]

² Lady Anne Conolly. [Or.]

not intelligible. Her grace of Kingston's glory approaches to consummation in a more worldly style. The duke³ is dying, and has given her the whole estate, £17,000 a-year. I am told she has already notified the contents of the will, and made offers of the sale of Thoresby. Pious matrons have various ways of expressing decency.

Your lordship's new bow-window thrives. I do not want it to remind me of its master and mistress, to whom

I am ever the most devoted humble servant.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Arlington-street, Nov. 15, 1773.

I AM very sorry, my dear lord, that you are coming towards us so slowly and unwillingly. I cannot quite wonder at the latter. The world is an old acquaintance that does not improve upon one's hands: however, one must not give way to the digusts it creates. My maxim, and practice, too, is to laugh, because I do not like to cry. I could shed a pail-full of tears over all I have seen and learnt since my poor nephew's misfortune—the more one has to do with men the worse one finds them. But can one mend them?—No. Shall we shut ourselves up from them?—No. We should grow humorists—and of all animals an Englishman is least made to live alone. For my part, I am conscious of so many faults, that I think I grow better the more bad I see in my neighbours; and there are so many I would not resemble, that it makes me watchful over myself. You, my lord, who have forty more good qualities than I have, should not seclude yourself. I do not wonder you despise knaves and fools; but remember, they want better examples; they will never grow ashamed by conversing with one another.

I came to settle here on Friday, being drowned out of Twick-

³ The duke of Kingston died 22d Sept. 1773, when all his honours became extinct. His estates, after the death of his widow, the celebrated duchess, which took place in 1788, devolved upon his nephew Charles Meadows, son of Philip Meadows, esq., by lady Frances Pierrepont, sister and heir of the duke. The said Charles was created, in 1796, baron Pierrepont and viscount Neward, and in 1806, earl Manvers. [Ed.]

enham. I find the town desolate, and no news in it, but that the ministry give up the Irish tax—some say, because it will not pass in Ireland; others, because the city of London would have petitioned against it; and some, because there were factions in the council—which is not the most incredible of all. I am glad, for the sake of some of my friends who would have suffered by it, that it is over. In other respects, I have too much private business of my own to think about the public, which is big enough to take care of itself.

I have heard of some of lady ***'s mortifications. I have regard and esteem for her good qualities, which are many—but I doubt her genius will never suffer her to be quite happy. As she will not take the psalmist's advice of not putting trust, I am sure she would not follow mine; for, with all her piety, king David is the only royal person she will not listen to, and therefore I forbear my sweet counsel. When she and lord H*** meet, will not they put you in mind of count Gage and lady Mary Herbert, who met in the mines of Asturias, after they had failed of the crown of Poland?—Adieu, my dear lord! Come you and my lady among us. You have some friends that are not odious, and who will be rejoiced to see you both—witness, for one,

Yours most faithfully.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 4, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

We have dropped one another, as if we were not antiquaries, but people of this world—or do you disclaim me, because I have quitted the Society? I could give you but too sad reasons for my silence. The gout kept entire possession of me for six months; and, before it released me, lord Orford's illness and affairs engrossed me totally. I have been twice in Norfolk since you heard from me. I am now at liberty again. What is your account of yourself! To ask you to come above ground, even so far as to see me, I know is in vain—or I certainly would ask it. You impose Carthusian shackles on yourself, will not qu your cell, nor will speak above once a week. I am glad even to hear of you, and to see your hand, though you make that as

much like print as you can. If you were to be tempted abroad, it would be a pilgrimage: and I can lure you even with that. My chapel is finished, and the shrine will actually be placed in less than a fortnight. My father is said to have said, that every man had his price. You are a *Beatus*, indeed, if you resist a shrine. Why should not you add to your claustral virtues that of a peregrination to Strawberry? You will find me quite alone in July. Consider, Strawberry is almost the last monastery left, at least in England. Poor Mr. Bateman's is despoiled. Lord Bateman has stripped and plundered it: has sequestered the best things, has advertised the site, and is dirtily selling by auction what he neither would keep, nor can sell for a sum that is worth while. I was hurt to see half the ornaments of the chapel, and the reliquaries, and in short a thousand trifles, exposed to sneers. I am buying a few to keep for the founder's sake. Surely it is very indecent for a favourite relation, who is rich, to shew so little remembrance and affection. I suppose Strawberry will have the same fate! It has already happened to two of my friends. Lord Bristol got his mother's house from his brother, by persuading her he was in love with it. He let it in a month after she was dead—and all her favourite pictures and ornaments, which she had ordered not to be removed, are mouldering in a garret!

You are in the right to care so little for a world, where there is no measure but *avoirdupois*. Adieu!

Yours sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, May 28, 1774.

NOTHING will be more agreeable to me, dear sir, than a visit from you in July. I will try to persuade Mr. Granger to meet you; and if you had any such thing as summer in the fens, I would desire you to bring a bag with you. We are almost freezing here in the midst of beautiful verdure, with a profusion of blossoms and flowers; but I keep good fires, and seem to feel warm weather while I look through the window; for the way to ensure summer in England, is to have it framed and glazed in a comfortable room.

I shall be still more glad to hear you are settled in your living. Burnham is almost in my neighbourhood; and its being in that of Eton and Windsor, will more than console you, I hope, for leaving Ely and Cambridge. Pray let me know the moment you are certain. It would now be a disappointment to me as well as you. You shall be inaugurated in my chapel, which is much more venerable than your parish church, and has the genuine air of antiquity. I bought very little of poor Mr. Bateman's. His nephew disposed of little that was worth house-room, and yet pulled the whole to pieces.

Mr. Pennant has published a new *Tour to Scotland and the Hebrides*: and, though he has endeavoured to paint their dismal isles and rocks in glowing colours, they will not be satisfied; for he seems no bigot about Ossian, at least in some passages, and is free in others, which their intolerating spirit will resent. I cannot say the book is very entertaining to me, as it is more a book of rates than of antiquities. The most amusing part was communicated to him by Mr. Banks, who found whole islands that bear nothing but columns, as other places do grass and barley. There is a beautiful cave called Fingal's; which proves that nature loves Gothic architecture.

Mr. Pennant has given a new edition of his former *Tour* with more cuts. Among others, is the vulgar head, called the countess of Desmond. I told him I had discovered, and proved past contradiction, that it is Rembrandt's mother. He owned it, and said, he would correct it by a note—but he has not. This is a brave way of being an antiquary! as if there could be any merit in giving for genuine what one knows to be spurious. He is, indeed, a superficial man, and knows little of history or antiquity: but he has a violent rage for being an author. He set out with *Ornithology*, and a little *Natural History*, and picks up his knowledge as he rides. I have a still lower idea of Mr. Gough; for Mr. Pennant, at least, is very civil: the other is a hog. Mr. Fenn,¹ another smatterer in antiquity, but a very good sort of

¹ Sir John Fenn, who edited the "*Original Letters written during the Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., Richard III., and Henry VII., by various Persons of rank and consequence, digested in a chronological order; with Notes historical and explanatory,*"—which were published in four vols. 4to., between the years 1787—1789. The Letters are principally by members of the Paston family and others, who were of great consequence in

man, told me, Mr. Gough desired to be introduced to me—but as he has been such a bear to you,² he shall not come. The Society of Antiquaries put me in mind of what the old lord Pembroke said to Anstis, the herald: “Thou silly fellow, thou dost not know thy own silly business.” If they went beyond taste, by poking into barbarous ages, when there was no taste, one could forgive them—but they catch at the first ugly thing they see, and take it for old, because it is new to them, and then usher it pompously into the world, as if they had made a discovery; though they have not yet cleared up a single point that is of the least importance, or that tends to settle any obscure passage in history.

I will not condole with you, on having had the gout, since you find it has removed other complaints. Besides, as it begins late, you are never likely to have it severely. I shall be in terrors in two or three months, having had the four last fits periodically and biennially. Indeed the two last were so long and severe, that my remaining and shattered strength could ill support such.

I must repeat how glad I shall be to have you at Burnham. When people grow old, as you and I do, they should get together. Others do not care for us: but we seem wiser to one another by finding fault with them. Not that I am apt to dislike young folks, whom I think every thing becomes: but it is a kind of self-defence to live in a body. I dare to say, that monks never find out that they grow old fools. Their age gives them authority, and nobody contradicts them. In the world, one cannot help perceiving one is out of fashion. Women play at cards with women of their own standing, and censure others between the deals, and thence conclude themselves Gamaliels. *I*, who see many young men with better parts than myself, submit with a good grace, or retreat hither to my castle, where I am satisfied with what I have done, and am always in good humour. But I like to have one or two old friends with me. I do not much invite the juvenile, who think my castle and me of equal antiquity: for no wonder, if they suppose George I. lived in the time of the crusades.

Norfolk at the time. Sir John, who was a native of Norwich, died in 1794. A fifth volume was published in 1823. [Ed.]

² Alluding to his not having answered a letter from Mr. Cole for nearly a twelvemonth. [Or.]

Adieu ! my good sir, and pray let Burnham Wood and Dunsinane be good neighbours.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 21, 1774.

YOUR illness, dear sir, is the worst excuse you could make me ; and the worse, as you may be well in a night, if you will, by taking six grains of James's Powder. He cannot cure death ; but he can most complaints that are not mortal or chronical. He could cure you so soon of colds, that he would cure you of another distemper, to which I doubt you are a little subject, the *fear of them*. I hope you were certain, that illness is a legal plea for missing induction, or you will have nursed a cough and hoarseness with too much tenderness, as they certainly could bear a journey. Never see my face again, if you are not rector of Burnham. How can you be so bigotted to Milton ? I should have thought the very name would have prejudiced you against the place, as the name is all that could approach towards reconciling me to the fens. I shall be very glad to see you here, whenever you have resolution enough to quit your cell. But since Burnham and the neighbourhood of Windsor and Eaton have no charms for you, can I expect that Strawberry-hill should have any ? Methinks, when one grows old, one's contemporary friends should be our best amusement : for younger people are soon tired of us, and our old stories : but I have found the contrary in some of mine. For your part, you care for conversing with none but the dead : for I reckon the unborn, for whom you are writing, as much dead, as those from whom you collect.

You certainly ask no favour, dear sir, when you want prints of me. They are at any body's service that thinks them worth having. The owner sets very little value on them, since he sets very little, indeed, on himself : as a man, a very faulty one ; and as an author, a very middling, one : which whoever thinks a comfortable rank, is not at all of my opinion. Pray convince me that you think I mean sincerely, by not answering me with a compliment. It is very weak to be pleased with flattery ; the stupidest of all delusions to beg it. From you I should take it ill. We

have known one another almost fifty years—to very little purpose, indeed, if any ceremony is necessary, or downright sincerity not established between us. Only tell me that you are recovered, and that I shall see you some time or other. I have finished the catalogue of my collection; but you shall never have it without fetching, nor, though a less punishment, the prints you desire. I propose in time to have plates of my house added to the catalogue, yet I cannot afford them, unless by degrees. Engravers are grown so much dearer, without my growing richer, that I must have patience! a quality I seldom have, *but* when I *must*. Adieu!

Yours ever.

P. S. I have lately been at Ampthill, and saw queen Catherine's cross. It is not near large enough for the situation, and would be fitter for a garden than a park: but it is executed in the truest and best taste. Lord Ossory is quite satisfied, as well as I, and designs Mr. Essex a present of some guineas. If ever I am richer, I shall consult the same honest man about building my offices, for which I have a plan: but if I have no more money ever, I will not run in debt, and distress myself: and therefore remit my designs to chance and a little economy.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 23, 1774.

I HAVE nothing to say—which is the best reason in the world for writing; for one must have a great regard for any body one writes to, when one begins a letter neither on ceremony nor business. You are seeing armies,¹ who are always in fine order and great spirits when they are in cold blood: I am sorry you thought it worth while to realize what I should have thought you could have seen in your mind's eye. However, I hope you will be amused and pleased with viewing heroes, both in their autumn and their bud. Vienna will be a new sight; so will the Austrian eagle and its two heads. I should like *seeing*, too, if any fairy would present me with a chest that would fly up into

¹ Mr. Conway was now on a tour of military curiosity through Flanders, Germany, Prussia, and part of Hungary. [Or.]

the air by touching a peg, and transport me whither I pleased in an instant : but roads, and inns, and dirt are terrible drawbacks on my curiosity. I grow so old, or so indolent, that I scarce stir from hence ; and the dread of the gout makes me almost as much a prisoner, as a fit of it. News I know none, if there is any. The papers tell me the city was to present a petition to the king against the Quebec-bill yesterday ; and I suppose they will tell me to-morrow whether it was presented. The king's speech tells me, there has nothing happened between the Russians and the Turks.² Lady Barrymore told t'other day, that nothing was to happen between her and lord E * * * * *. I am as well satisfied with these negatives, as I should have been with the contrary. I am much more interested about the rain, for it destroys all my roses and orange-flowers, of which I have exuberance ; and my hay is cut, and cannot be made. However, it is delightful to have no other distresses. When I compare my present tranquillity and indifference with all I suffered last year,³ I am thankful for my happiness, and enjoy it—unless the bell rings at the gate early in the morning—and then I tremble, and think it an express from Norfolk.

It is unfortunate, that when one has nothing to talk of but one's self, one should have nothing to say of one's self. It is shameful, too, to send such a scrap by the post. I think I shall reserve it till Tuesday. If I have then nothing to add, as is probable, you must content yourself with my good intentions, as you, I hope will with this speculative campaign. Pray, for the future, remain at home and build bridges : I wish you were here to expedite ours to Richmond, which they tell me will not be passable these two years. I have done looking so forward. Adieu !

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Matson, near Gloucester, Aug. 15, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

As I am your disciple in antiquities (for you studied them when I was but a scoffer), I think it my duty to give you some

² Peace between Russia and Turkey was however established, and the same proclaimed at St. Petersburg on the 14th August 1774. [Ed.]

³ During the illness of his nephew lord Orford. [Or.]

account of my journeyings in the good cause. You will not dislike my date. I am in the very mansion where king Charles I. and his two eldest sons lay during the siege; and there are marks of the last's hacking with his hanger on a window, as he told Mr. Selwin's grandfather afterwards. The present master has done due honour to the royal residence, and erected a good marble bust of the Martyr, in a little gallery. In a window is a shield in painted glass, with that king's, and his queen's arms, which I gave him. So you see I am not a rebel, when *alma mater* antiquity stands godmother.

I went again to the Cathedral, and, on seeing the monument of Edward II. a new historic doubt started, which I pray you to solve. His majesty has a longish beard; and such were certainly worn at that time. Who is the first historian that tells the story of his being shaven with cold water from a ditch, and weeping to supply warm, as he was carried to Berkeley castle? Is not this apocryphal? The house whence bishop Hooper¹ was carried to the stake, is still standing *tale quale*. I made a visit to his actual successor, Warburton, who is very infirm, speaks with much hesitation, and they say, begins to lose his memory. They have destroyed the beautiful cross; the two battered heads of Henry III. and Edward III. are in the post-master's garden.

Yesterday I made a jaunt four miles hence that pleased me exceedingly, to Prinknash, the individual villa of the abbots of Gloucester. I wished you there with their mitre on. It stands on a glorious, but impracticable hill, in the midst of a little forest of beech, and commanding Elysium. The house is small, but has good rooms, and though modernized here and there, not extravagantly. On the ceiling of the hall is Edward IVth's jovial device, a *fau-con serrure*. The chapel is low and small, but antique, and with painted glass, with many angels in their coronation robes, *i. e.* wings and crowns. Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour lay here: in the dining-room are their arms in glass, and of Catherine of Arragon, and of Bray's and Bridges. Under the window, a barbarous bas-relief head of Harry, young: as it is still on a sign of an ale-house, on the descent of the hill. Think of

¹ John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester, born in Somersetshire in 1495, and who, under the reign of Mary, having refused to recant his opinions, was burned alive before the cathedral of Gloucester in 1554. [Ed.]

my amazement, when they shewed me the chapel plate, and I found on it, on four pieces, my own arms, quartering my mother-in-law, Skerret's, and in a shield of pretence, those of Fortescue; certainly by mistake, for those of my sister-in-law, as the barony of Clinton was in abeyance between her and Fortescue lord Clinton. The whole is modern and blundered: for Skerret should be impaled, not quartered, and instead of our crest, are two spears tied together in a ducal coronet, and no coronet for my brother, in whose time this plate must have been made, and at whose sale it was probably bought; as he finished the repairs of the church at Houghton, for which, I suppose, this decoration was intended. But the silversmith was no herald, you see.

As I descended the hill, I found in a wretched cottage, a child, in an ancient oaken cradle, exactly in the form of that lately published from the cradle of Edward II. I purchased it for five shillings; but don't know whether I shall have fortitude enough to transport it to Strawberry-hill. People would conclude me in my second childhood.

To-day I have been at Berkeley and Thornbury castles. The first disappointed me much, though very entire. It is much smaller than I expected, but very entire, except a small part burnt two years ago, while the present earl was in the house. The fire began in the housekeeper's room, who never appeared more; but as she was strict over the servants, and not a bone of her was found, it was supposed that she was murdered, and the body conveyed away. The situation is not elevated nor beautiful, and little improvements made of late, but some silly ones *à la Chinoise*, by the present dowager. In good sooth, I can give you but a very imperfect account; for, instead of the lord's being gone to dine with the mayor of Gloucester, as I expected, I found him in the midst of all his captains of the militia. I am so sillily shy of strangers and youngsters, that I hurried through the chambers, and looked for nothing but the way out of every room. I just observed that there were many bad portraits of the family, but none ancient; as if the Berkeleys had been commissaries, and raised themselves in the last war. There is a plentiful addition of those of lord Berkeley of Stratton, but no knights templars, or barons as old as Edward I.; yet are there three beds on which there may have been as frisky doings three centuries ago, as there probably have been within these ten years.

The room shown for the murder of Edward II., and the shrieks of an agonizing king, I verily believe to be genuine. It is a dismal chamber, almost at top of the house, quite detached, and to be approached only by a kind of foot-bridge, and from that descends a large flight of steps that terminate on strong gates; exactly a situation for a *corps de garde*. In that room they show you a cast of a face in plaister, and tell you it was taken from Edward's. I was not quite so easy of faith about that; for it is evidently the face of Charles I.

The steeple of the church, lately rebuilt handsomely, stands some paces from the body; in the latter are three tombs of the old Berkeleys, with cumbent figures. The wife of the lord Berkeley,² who was supposed to be privy to the murder, has a curious head-gear; it is like a long horse-shoe, quilted in quarter-foils; and like lord Foppington's wig, allows no more than the breadth of a half-crown to be discovered of the face. Stay, I think I mistake; the husband was a conspirator against Richard II. not Edward. But in those days, loyalty was not so rife as at present.

From Berkeley Castle I went to Thornbury, of which the ruins are half ruined. It would have been glorious, if finished.³ I wish the lords of Berkeley had retained the spirit of deposing till Henry the VIII.th's time! The situation is fine, though that was not the fashion; for all the windows of the great apartment look into the inner court. The prospect was left to the servants. Here I had two adventures. I could find nobody to show me about. I saw a paltry house that I took for the sexton's, at the corner of the close, and bade my servant ring, and ask who could show me the Castle. A voice in a passion flew from a casement, and issued from a divine. "What! was it his business to show the Castle? Go look for somebody else! What did the fellow

² Thomas, third lord Berkeley, was entrusted with the custody of Edward II., but, owing to the humanity with which he treated the captive monarch, he was forced to resign his prisoner and his castle to lord Maltravers and sir Thomas Gournay. After the murder of Edward, lord Berkeley was arraigned as a participator in the crime, but honourably acquitted.

The lady Berkeley, alluded to by Walpole, was his first wife, Margaret, daughter of Roger de Mortimer, earl of March, and widow of Robert Vere, earl of Oxford. [Ed.]

³ Thornbury Castle, was designed, but never finished, by the duke of Buckingham, in Henry VIII.'s time. [Ed.]

ring for as if the house was on fire?" The poor Swiss came back in a fright, and said, the doctor had sworn at him. Well—we scrambled over a stone stile, saw a room or two glazed near the gate, and rung at it. A damsel came forth, and satisfied our curiosity. When we had done seeing, I said, "Child, we don't know our way, and want to be directed into the London-road; I see the duke's steward yonder at the window, pray desire him to come to me, that I may consult him." She went—he stood staring at us at the window—and sent his footman. I do not think courtesy is resident at Thornbury. As I returned through the close, the divine came running out of breath, and without his beaver or hand, and calls out, "Sir, I am come to justify myself: your servant says I swore at him: I am no swearer—Lord bless me! [dropping his voice] it is Mr. Walpole!" "Yes, sir, and I think you was lord Beauchamp's tutor at Oxford, but I have forgot your name." "Holwell, sir." "Oh! yes—" and then I comforted him, and laid the ill-breeding on my footman's being a foreigner; but could not help saying, I really had taken his house for the sexton's. "Yes, sir, it is not very good without, won't you please to walk in?" I did, and found the inside ten times worse, and a lean wife, suckling a child. He was making an Index to Homer, is going to publish the chief beauties, and I believe had just been reading some of the delicate civilities that pass between Agamemnon and Achilles, and that what my servant took for oaths, were only Greek compliments. Adieu!

Yours ever.

You see I have not a line more of paper.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, August 18, 1774.

It is very hard, that because you do not get my letters, you will not let me receive yours, who do receive them. I have not had a line from you these five weeks. Of your honours and glories fame has told me;¹ and for aught I know,

¹ Alluding to the distinguished notice taken of General Conway by the king of Prussia. [Or.]

you may be a *veldt-marshal* by this time, and despise such a poor cottager as me. Take notice, I shall disclaim you in my turn, if you are sent on a command against Dantzick, or to usurp a new district in Poland.²

I have seen no armies, kings, or empresses, and cannot send you such august gazettes; nor are they what I want to hear of. I like to hear you are well and diverted; nay, have pimped towards the latter, by desiring lady Ailesbury to send you monsieur de Guisnes's invitation to a military fête at Metz.³ For my part, I wish you was returned to your plough. Your Sabine farm⁴ is in high beauty. I have lain there twice within this week, going to and from a visit to George Selwyn, near Gloucester: a tour as much to my taste as yours to you. For fortified towns I have seen ruined castles. Unluckily, in that of Berkeley I found a whole regiment of militia in garrison, and as many young officers as if * * * * * was in possession, and ready to surrender at indiscretion. I endeavoured to comfort myself, by figuring that they were guarding Edward II. I have seen many other ancient sights without asking leave of the king of Prussia: it would not please me so much to write *to* him, as it once did to write *for* him.⁵

They have found at least seventy thousand pounds of lord Thomond's.⁶ George Howard has decked himself with a red riband, money, and honours!—Charming things! and yet one may be very happy without them.

The young * * * * * is returned from his travels in love with the pretender's queen, who has permitted him to have her picture. What can I tell you more? Nothing. Indeed, if I only write to postmasters, my letter is long enough. Every body's

² The first dismemberment of Poland had taken place in the preceding year, by which a third of her territory was ceded to Russia, Austria, and Prussia. [Ed.]

³ To see the review of the French regiment of carabineers, then commanded by monsieur de Guisnes. [Or.]

⁴ Park-place. [Or.]

⁵ Alluding to the letter to Rousseau in the name of the king of Prussia. [Or.]

⁶ Percy Wyndham Obrien. He was the second son of sir Charles Wyndham, the chancellor of the exchequer to queen Anne, and took the name of Obrien pursuant to the will of his uncle the earl of Thomond in Ireland. [Or.]

head but mine is full of elections. I had the satisfaction at Gloucester, where G. Selwyn is canvassing, of reflecting on my own wisdom. *Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis*, &c. I am certainly the greatest philosopher in the world, without ever having thought of being so: always employed, and never busy; eager about trifles, and indifferent to every thing serious. Well, if it is not philosophy, at least it is content. I am as pleased here with my own nutshell, as any monarch you have seen these two months astride his eagle—not but I was dissatisfied when I missed you at Park-place, and was peevish at your being in an Aulic chamber. Adieu!

Yours ever.

P.S. They tell us from Vienna that the peace is made between Tisiphone and the Turk: is it true?

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 7, 1774.

I DID not think you had been so like the rest of the world, as, when you pretended to be visiting armies, to go in search of gold and silver mines!¹ The favours of courts and the smiles of emperors and kings, I see, have corrupted even you, and perverted you to a nabob. Have you brought away an ingot in the calf of your leg? What abomination have you committed? All the gazettes in Europe have sent you on different negotiations: instead of returning with a treaty in your pocket, you will only come back with bills of exchange. I don't envy your subterraneous travels, nor the hospitality of the Hungarians. Where did you find a spoonful of Latin about you? I have not attempted to speak Latin these thirty years, without perceiving I was talking Italian thickened with terminations in *us* and *orum*. I should have as little expected to find an Ovid in those regions; but I suppose the gentry of Presburg read him for a fashionable author, as our 'squires and their wives do the last collections of

¹ Mr. Conway had gone to see the gold and silver mines of Cremnitz, in the neighbourhood of Grau in Hungary. [Or.]

ballads that have been sung at Vauxhall and Marybone. I wish you may have brought away some sketches of duke Albert's architecture. You know I deal in the works of royal authors, though I have never admired any of their own buildings, not excepting king Solomon's temple. Stanley² and Edmondson in Hungary! What carried them thither? The chase of mines, too? The first, perhaps, waddled thither obliquely, as a parrot would have done whose direction was to Naples.

Well, I am glad you have been entertained, and seen such a variety of sights. You don't mind fatigues and hardships, and hospitality, the two extremes that to me poison travelling. I shall never see any thing more, unless I meet with a ring that renders one invisible. It was but the other day that, being with George Selwyn at Gloucester, I went to view Berkeley castle, knowing the earl was to dine with the mayor of Gloucester. Alas! when I arrived, he had put off the party to enjoy his militia a day longer, and the house was full of officers. They might be in the Hungarian dress, for aught I knew; for I was so dismayed, that I would fain have persuaded the housekeeper that she could not show me the apartments; and when she opened the hall, and I saw it full of captains, I hid myself in a dark passage, and nothing could persuade me to enter, till they had the civility to quit the place. When I was forced at last to go over the castle, I ran through it without seeing any thing, as if I had been afraid of being detained prisoner.

I have no news to send you: if I had any, I would not conclude, as all correspondents do, that lady Ailesbury left nothing untold. Lady P**** is gone to hold mobs at Ludlow, where there is actual war, and where a *knight*, I forget his name, one of their friends, has been *almost cut in two* with a scythe. When you have seen all the other armies in Europe, you will be just in time for many election-battles—perhaps, for a war in America, whither more troops are going. Many of those already sent have deserted; and to be sure the prospect there is not smiling. *A-propos*, lord Mahon, whom lord Stanhope, his father, will not suffer to wear powder because wheat is so dear, was presented t'other day in coal black hair and a white feather: they said *he had been tarred and feathered*.

² Mr. Hans Stanley. [Or.]

In France, you will find a new scene.³ The chancellor is sent, a little before his time, to the devil. The old parliament is expected back. I am sorry to say I shall not meet you there. It will be too late in the year for me to venture, especially as I now live in dread of my biennial gout, and should die of it in an *hotel garni*, and forced to receive all comers—I, who you know lock myself up when I am ill as if I had the plague.

I wish I could fill my sheet, in return for your five pages. The only thing you will care for knowing is, that I never saw Mrs. Damer better in her life, nor look so well. You may trust me, who am so apt to be frightened about her.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 27, 1774.

I SHOULD be very ungrateful indeed if I thought of complaining of you, who are goodness itself to me: and when I did not receive letters from you, I concluded it happened from your eccentric positions. I am amazed, that, hurried as you have been, and your eyes and thoughts crowded with objects, you have been able to find time to write me so many and such long letters, over and above all those to lady Ailesbury, your daughter, brother, and other friends. Even lord Strafford brags of your frequent remembrance. That your superabundance of royal beams would dazzle you, I never suspected. Even I enjoy for you the distinctions you have received—though I should hate such things for myself, as they are particularly troublesome to me, and I am particularly awkward under them, and as I abhor the king of Prussia, and, if I passed through Berlin, should have no joy like avoiding him—like one of our countrymen, who changed horses at Paris, and asked what the name of that town was? All the other civilities you have received I am perfectly happy in. The Germans are certainly a civil, well-meaning people, and, I believe, one of the least corrupted nations in Europe. I don't think them very agreeable; but who do I think are so? A great many

³ In consequence of the death, on the 10th May 1774, of Louis XV. He died of the small pox, which he had received in a most virulent form from a country girl, with whom he was engaged in an intrigue. [Ed.]

French women, some English men, and a few English women—exceedingly few French men. Italian women are the grossest, vulgarest of the sex. If an Italian man has a grain of sense, he is a buffoon——So much for Europe.

I have already told you, and so must lady Ailesbury, that my courage fails me, and I dare not meet you at Paris. As the period is arrived when the gout used to come, it is never a moment out of my head. Such a suffering, such a helpless condition as I was in for five months and a half, two years ago, makes me tremble from head to foot. I should die at once if seized in a French inn; or what, if possible, would be worse, at Paris, where I must admit every body.—I, who you know can hardly bear to see even you when I am ill, and who shut up myself here, and would not let lord and lady Hertford come near me—I, who have my room washed though in bed, how could I bear French dirt? In short, I, who am so capricious, and whom you are pleased to call a philosopher, I suppose because I have given up every thing but my own will—how could I keep my temper, who have no way of keeping my temper but by keeping it out of every body's way! No, I must give up the satisfaction of being with you at Paris. I have just learnt to give up my pleasures, but I cannot give up my pains, which such selfish people as I, who have suffered much, grow to compose into a system that they are partial to, because it is their own. I must make myself amends when you return: you will be more stationary, I hope, for the future; and if I live I shall have intervals of health. In lieu of me you will have a charming succedaneum, lady ***. Her father, who is more a hero than I, is packing up his decrepit bones, and goes, too. I wish she may not have him to nurse, instead of diverting herself.

The present state of your country is, that it is drowned and dead drunk; all water without, and wine within. Opposition for the next elections every where, even in Scotland; not from party, but as laying out money to advantage. In the head-quarters, indeed, party is not out of the question: the day after to-morrow will be a great bustle in the city for a lord mayor,¹ and all the winter in Westminster, where lord Mahon² and Humphrey Cotes

¹ When Mr. Wilkes was elected. [Or.]

² Charles, lord Mahon, born 3d August 1753, who succeeded to the earldom of Stanhope on the death of his father, Philip, the second earl, and

oppose the court. Lady * * * * is saving her money at Ludlow and Powis castles by keeping open house day and night against sir Watkin Williams, and fears she shall be kept there till the general election. It has rained this whole month, and we have got another inundation. The Thames is as broad as your Danube, and all my meadows are under water. Lady Browne and I, coming last Sunday night from lady Blandford's, were in a piteous plight. The ferry-boat was turned round by the current, and carried to Isleworth. Then we ran against the piers of our new bridge, and the horses were frightened. Luckily my *cicisbeo* was a catholic, and screamed to so many saints, that some of them at the nearest ale-house came and saved us, or I should have had no more gout, or what I dreaded I should ; for I concluded we should be carried ashore somewhere, and be forced to wade through the mud up to my middle. So you see one may wrap one's-self up in flannel and be in danger, without visiting all the armies on the face of the globe, and putting the immortality of one's chaise to the proof.

I am ashamed of sending you but three sides of smaller paper in answer to seven large—but what can I do? I see nothing, know nothing, do nothing. My castle is finished, I have nothing new to read, I am tired of writing, I have no new or old bit for my printer. I have only black hoods around me ; or, if I go to town, the family-party in Grosvenor-street. One trait will give you a sample of how I passed my time, and made me laugh, as it put me in mind of you, at least it was a fit of absence, much more likely to have happened to you than to me. I was playing at eighteenpenny tredrille with the duchess of Newcastle³ and lady Browne, and certainly not much interested in the game. I cannot recollect nor conceive what I was thinking of, but I pushed the cards very gravely to the duchess, and said, “*Doctor*, you are to deal.” You may guess at their astonishment, and how much it made us all laugh. I wish it may make you smile a moment, or that I had any thing better to send you. Adieu, most affectionately.

Yours ever.

was distinguished alike for his mechanical genius and his scientific attainments. [Ed.]

³ Catherine, eldest daughter and heiress of the right hon. Henry Pelham, married to Henry, ninth earl of Lincoln, who, in consequence of his marriage

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 28, 1774.

LADY Ailesbury brings you this,¹ which is not a letter, but a paper of directions, and the counterpart of what I have written to madame du Deffand. I beg of you seriously to take a great deal of notice of this dear old friend of mine. She will, perhaps, expect more attention from *you*, as my friend, and as it is her own nature a little, than will be quite convenient to you: but you have an infinite deal of patience and good-nature, and will excuse it. I was afraid of her importuning lady Ailesbury, who has a vast deal to see and do, and, therefore, I have prepared mad. du D., and told her lady Ailesbury loves amusements, and that, having never been at Paris before, she must not confine her: so you must pay for both—and it will answer: and I do not, I own, ask this only for madame du Deffand's sake, but for my own, and a little for yours. Since the late king's death she has not dared to write to me freely, and I want to know the present state of France exactly, both to satisfy my own curiosity, and for her sake, as I wish to learn whether her pension, &c. is in any danger from the present ministry, some of whom are not her friends. She can tell you a great deal if she will—by that I don't mean that she is reserved, or partial to her own country against ours—quite the contrary; she loves me better than all France together—but she hates politics; and therefore, to make her talk on it, you must tell her it is to satisfy me, and that I want to know whether she is well at court, whether she has any fears from the government, particularly from Maurepas and Nivernois: and that I am eager to have monsieur de Choiseul and *ma grand-maman*, the duchess, restored to power. If you take it on this foot easily, she will talk to you with the utmost frankness and with amazing cleverness. I have told her you are strangely

with her, inherited, in 1768, the dukedom of Newcastle-under-Lyne, on the demise of the countess's uncle, Thomas Pelham Holles, who had been created duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, with special remainder to the earl of Lincoln, on the 13th November 1756. [Ed.]

¹ Mr. Conway ended his military tour at Paris, whither lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer went to meet him, and where they spent the winter together. [Or.]

absent, and that, if she does not repeat it over and over, you will forget every syllable: so I have prepared her to joke and be quite familiar with you at once. She knows more of personal characters, and paints them better than any body: but let this be between ourselves, for I would not have a living soul suspect that I get any intelligence from her, which would hurt her; and, therefore, I beg you not to let any human being know of this letter, nor of your conversations with her, neither English nor French.

Mad. du Deffand hates *les philosophes*, so you must give them up to her. She and madame Geoffrin are no friends: so, if you go thither, don't tell her of it. Indeed you would be sick of that house, whither all the pretended *beaux esprits* and *faux savants* go, and where they are very impertinent and dogmatic.

Let me give you one other caution, which I shall give lady Ailesbury, too. Take care of your papers at Paris, and have a very strong lock to your *porte-feuille*. In the *hotels garnis* they have double keys to every lock, and examine every drawer and paper of the English that they can get at. They will pilfer, too, whatever they can. I was robbed of half my clothes there the first time, and they wanted to hang poor Louis to save the people of the house who had stolen the things.

Here is another thing I must say. Madame du Deffand has kept a great many of my letters, and, as she is very old, I am in pain about them. I have written to her to beg she will deliver them up to you to bring back to me, and I trust she will. If she does, be so good to take great care of them. If she does not mention them, tell her just before you come away, that I begged you to bring them; and if she hesitates, convince her how it would hurt me to have letters written in very bad French, and mentioning several people, both French and English, fall into bad hands, and, perhaps, be printed.

Let me desire you to read this letter more than once, that you may not forget my requests, which are very important to me; and I must give you one other caution, without which all would be useless. There is at Paris a mademoiselle de l'Espinasse,² a

² Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, the friend of d'Alembert, born at Lyons in 1732, was the natural child of Mademoiselle d'Albon, whose legitimate daughter was married to the marquis de Vichy. After the death of her mother, she resided with M. and Mad. de Vichy, but in consequence of some

pretended *bel esprit*, who was formerly an humble companion of madame du Deffand ; and betrayed her and used her very ill. I beg of you not to let any body carry you thither. It would disoblige my friend of all things in the world, and she would never tell you a syllable ; and I own it would hurt me, who have such infinite obligations to her, that I should be very unhappy, if a particular friend of mine showed her this disregard. She has done every thing upon earth to please and serve me, and I owe it to her to be earnest about this attention. Pray do not mention it ; it might look simple in me, and yet I owe it to her, as I know it would hurt her : and, at her age, with her misfortunes, and with infinite obligations on my side, can I do too much to show my gratitude, or prevent her any new mortification ? I dwell upon it, because she has some enemies so spiteful that they try to carry all English to mademoiselle de l'Espinasse.

I wish the duchess of Choiseul may come to Paris while you are there ; but I fear she will not ; you would like her of all things. She has more sense and more virtues than almost any human being. If you choose to see any of the *savants*, let me recommend monsieur Buffon. He has not only much more sense than any of them, but is an excellent old man, humane, gentle, well-bred, and with none of the arrogant pertness of all the rest. If he is at Paris, you will see a good deal of the comte de Broglie³ at madame du Deffand's. He is not a genius of the first water, but lively and sometimes agreeable. The court, I fear, will be at Fontainebleau, which will prevent your seeing many, unless you go thither. Adieu ! at Paris ! I leave the rest of my paper for England, if I happen to have any thing particular to tell you.

disagreements left them, and in May 1754, she went to reside with Madame du Deffand, with whom she remained until 1764. The letters of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse were published some few years since. [Ed.]

³ It was the count de Broglie who, having been commissioned to escort the future comtesse d'Artois to Pont de Beauvoisin, and being exiled, before entering upon the execution of the office, drew from the duc de Choiseul, the observation : “ Il prend le ministère par la queue.” [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 11, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

I answer yours immediately; as one pays a shilling to clench a bargain, when one suspects the seller, I accept your visit in the last week of this month, and will prosecute you if you do not execute.

I have nothing to say about elections, but that I congratulate myself every time I feel I have nothing to do with them. By my nephew's strange conduct about his boroughs, and by many other reasons, I doubt whether he is so well as he seemed to Dr. Barnardiston. It is a subject I do not love to talk on; but I know I tremble every time the bell rings at my gate at an unusual hour.

Have you seen Mr. Granger's Supplement? Methinks it grows too diffuse. I have hinted to him that fewer panegyrics from funeral sermons would not hurt it. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sunday, October 16, 1774.

I RECEIVED this morning your letter of the 6th from Strasburg; and before you get this you will have had three from me by lady Ailesbury. One of them should have reached you much sooner; but lady Ailesbury kept it, not being sure where you was. It was in answer to one in which you told me an anecdote, which in this last you ask if I had received.

Your letters are always so welcome to me, that you certainly have no occasion for excusing what you say or do not say. Your details amuse me, and so would what you suppress; for, though I have no military genius or curiosity, whatever relates to yourself must interest me. The honours you have received, though I have so little taste for such things myself, gave me great satisfaction; and I do not know whether there is not more pleasure in *not* being a prophet in one's own country, when one is almost received like Mahomet in every other. To be an idol at home, is

no assured touch-stone of merit. Stocks and stones have been adored in fifty regions, but do not bear transplanting. The Apollo Belvidere and The Hercules Farnese may lose their temples, but never lose their estimation, by travelling.

Elections, you may be sure, are the only topic here at present—I mean in England—not on this quiet hill, where I think of them as little as of the spot where the battle of Blenheim was fought. They say there will not be much alteration, but the phoenix will rise from its ashes with most of its old plumes, or as bright. Wilkes at first seemed to carry all before him, besides having obtained the mayoralty of London at last. Lady H**** told me last Sunday, that he would carry twelve members. I have not been in town since, nor know any thing but what I collect from the papers; so, if my letter is opened, M. de Vergennes will not amass any very authentic intelligence from my *dispatches*.

What I have taken notice of, is as follows: For the city Wilkes will have but three members: he will lose Crosby; and Townsend will carry Oliver. In Westminster, Wilkes will not have one; his Humphrey Cotes is by far the lowest on the poll; lord Percy and lord T. Clinton are triumphant there. Her grace of Northumberland sits at a window in Covent-garden, harangues the mob, and is “Hail, fellow, well met!” At Dover, Wilkes has carried one, and probably will come in for Middlesex himself with Glynn. There have been great endeavours to oppose him, but to no purpose.—Of this I am glad, for I do not love a mob so near as Brentford; especially, as my road lies through it. Where he has any other interest I am too ignorant in these matters to tell you. Lord John Cavendish is opposed at York, and at the beginning of the poll had the fewest numbers. C**** F****, like the ghost in Hamlet, has shifted to many quarters; but in most the cock crew, and he walked off. In Southwark, there has been outrageous rioting; but I neither know the candidates, their connexions, nor success. This, perhaps, will appear a great deal of news at Paris: here, I dare to say, my butcher knows more.

I can tell you still less of America. There are two or three more ships with forces going thither, and sir William Draper¹ as second in command.

¹ Sir William Draper, K.B., the well-known respondent to Junius. Great as was the advantage enjoyed by Junius in the controversy, from his oppo-

Of private news, except that Dyson has had a stroke of palsy, and will die, there is certainly none; for I saw that shrill Morning Post, lady G * * * *, two hours ago, and she did not know a paragraph.

I forgot to mention to you M. de Maurepas. He was by far the ablest and most agreeable man I knew at Paris: and if you stay, I think I could take the liberty of giving you a letter to him; though, as he is now so great a man, and I remain so little an one, I don't know whether it would be quite so proper—though he was exceedingly good to me, and pressed me often to make him a visit in the country.—But lord Stormont can certainly carry you to him—a better passport.

There was one of my letters on which I wish to hear from you. There are always English coming from Paris, who would bring such a parcel; at least, you might send me one volume at a time, and the rest afterwards: but I should not care to have them ventured by the common conveyance. Madame du Deffand is negotiating for an enamel picture for me; but, if she obtains it, I had rather wait for it till you come. The books I mean, are those I told you lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer would give you a particular account of, for they know my mind exactly. Don't reproach me with not meeting you at Paris. Recollect what I suffered this time two years; and, if you can have any notion of fear, imagine my dread of torture for five months and a half! When all the quiet of Strawberry did but just carry me through it, could I support it in the noise of a French hotel! and, what would be still worse, exposed to receive all visits? for the French, you know, are never more in public than in the act of death. I am like animals, and love to hide myself *when I am dying*. Thank God, I am now two days beyond the crisis when I expected my dreadful periodic visitant, and begin to grow very sanguine about the virtue of the bootikins. I shall even have courage to go to-morrow to Chalfont for two days, as it is but a journey of two hours. I would not be a day's journey from hence for all lord Clive's diamonds. This will satisfy *you*. I

ment's entire ignorance of him, we suspect that the dispassionate reader of the present day will rise from a perusal of the letters of the belligerents, quite as well satisfied with the letters of Sir William as with those of his opponent, who can, after all, only be looked upon as an anonymous, and consequently irresponsible, accuser. [Ed.]

doubt madame du Deffand is not so easily convinced : therefore, pray do not drop a hint before her of blaming me for not meeting you ; rather assure her you are persuaded it would have been too great a risk for me at this season. I wish to have her quite clear of my attachment to her ; but that I do not always find so easy. You, I am sure, will find her all zeal and *empressement* for you and yours. Adieu !

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, October 29, 1774.

I HAVE received your letter of the 23d, and it certainly overpays me, when you thank instead of scolding me, as I feared. A passionate man has very little merit in being in a passion, and is sure of saying many things he repents, as I do. I only hope you think that I could not be so much in the wrong for every body ; nor should have been, perhaps, even for you, if I had not been certain I was the only person, at that moment, that could serve you essentially : and at such a crisis, I am sure I should take exactly the same part again, except in saying some things I did, of which I am ashamed !¹ I will say no more now on that topic, nor on any thing relating to it, because I have written my mind very fully, and you will know it soon. I can only tell you now, that I approve extremely your way of thinking, and hope you will not change it before you hear from me, and know some material circumstances. You and lady Ailesbury and I agree exactly, and she and I certainly consider only *you*. I do not answer her last, because I could not help telling you how very kindly I take your letter. All I beg is, that you would have no delicacy about my serving you any way. You know it is a pleasure to me : any body else may have views that would embarrass you ; and, therefore, till you are on the spot, and can judge for yourself (which I always insist on, because you are cooler than I, and because, though I have no interests to serve, I have passions, which equally mislead one), it

¹ This^{*} relates to Mr. Walpole having resented, in a very warm manner, some neglect on the part of his friends, which deprived Mr. Conway of a seat in parliament at the general election, which took place in the year 1774. [Ed.]

will be wiser to decline all kind of proposals and offers. You will avoid the plague of contested elections and solicitations : and I see no reasons, at present, that can tempt you to be in a hurry.

You must not expect to be madame du Deffand's first favourite. Lady Ailesbury has made such a progress there, that you will not easily supplant her. I have received volumes in her praise. You have a better chance with madame de C****, who is very agreeable ; and I hope you are not such an English husband as not to conform to the manners of Paris while you are there.

I forgot to mention one or two of my favourite objects to lady Ailesbury, nay, I am not sure she will taste one of them, the church of the Celestines. It is crowded with beautiful old tombs ; one of Francis II., whose beatitude is presumed from his being husband of the martyr Mary Stuart. Another is of the first wife of John duke of Bedford, the regent of France. I think you was once there with me formerly. The other is Richelieu's tomb, at the Sorbonne—but that every body is carried to see. The hotel de *Carnavalet*,² near the Place Royale, is worth looking at, even for the façade, as you drive by. But of all earthly things the most worth seeing is the house at Versailles, where the king's pictures, not hung up, are kept. There is a treasure past belief, though in sad order, and piled one against another. Monsieur de Guerchy once carried me thither ; and you may certainly get leave. At the Luxembourg are some hung up, and one particularly is worth going to see alone : it is the Deluge by Nicolo Poussin, as winter. The three other seasons are good for nothing—but the Deluge is the first picture in the world of its kind. You will be shocked to see the glorious pictures at the Palais Royal transplanted to new canvasses, and new painted and varnished, as if they were to be scenes at the opera—at least, they had treated half a dozen of the best so, three years ago, and were going on. The prince of Monaco has a few fine, but still worse used ; one of them shines more than a looking-glass. I fear the exposition of pictures is over for this year ; it is generally very *diverting*.³ I, who went into every church of Paris, can assure you there are few worth it, but the Invalids—except the *scenery* at St. Roch, about one or two o'clock at noon, when the sun shines ; the Carmelites, for the Guido and the portrait of

² Where madame du Sevigné resided. [Or.]

³ He means from their extreme bad taste. [Or.]

madame de la Valiere as a Magdalen; the Val de Grace, for a moment; the *treasure* at Notre Dame; the Sainte Chapelle, where in the ante-chapel are two very large enamelled portraits; the tomb of Condé at the Great Jesuits in the rue St. Antoine, if not shut up; and the little church of St. Louis in the Louvre, where is a fine tomb of cardinal Fleury, but large enough to stand on Salisbury-plain. One thing some of you *must* remember, as you return; nay, it is better to go soon to St. Denis, and madame du Deffand must get you a particular order to be shown (which is never shown without) the effigies of the kings.⁴ They are in presses over the treasure which is shown, and where is the glorious antique cameo-cup; but the countenance of Charles IX. is so horrid and remarkable, you would think he had died on the morrow of the St. Barthelemi, and waked full of the recollection. If you love enamels and exquisite medals, get to see the collection of a monsieur d'Henery, who lives in the corner of the street where sir John Lambert lives—I forget its name. There is an old man behind the rue de Colombier, who has a great, but bad collection of old French portraits; I delighted in them, but perhaps you would not. *I*, you may be sure, hunted out every thing of that sort. The convent and collection of St. Germain, I mean that over against the hotel du Parc Royal, is well worth seeing—but I forget names strangely—Oh! delightful!—lord Cholmondeley sends me word he goes to Paris on Monday: I shall send this and my other letter by him. It was him I meant; I knew he was going, and had prepared it.

Pray take care to lock up your papers in a strong box, that nobody can open. They imagine you are at Paris on some commission, and there is no trusting French hotels or servants. America is in a desperate situation. The accounts from the Congress are not expected before the 10th, and expected very warm. I have not time to tell you some manœuvres against them that will make your blood curdle. Write to me when you

⁴ The abbey of St. Denis was sadly shorn of its glories during the Revolution. On the 16th October 1793, the coffin of Louis XV. was taken out of the vaults; and after a stormy debate it was decided to throw the remains of all the kings, even those of Henry IV. and Louis XIV., which were yet to a great degree preserved entire, into a pit, to melt down their leaden coffins on the spot, and to take away and melt down into bullets whatever lead beside there was in the church, not even excepting the roof. [Ed.]

can by private hands, as I will to you. There are always English passing backwards and forwards.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 7, 1774.

I HAVE written such tomes to Mr. Conway, madam, and have so nothing new to write, that I might as well, methinks, begin and end like the lady to her husband: *Je vous écris parceque je n'ai rien à faire: je finis parceque je n'ai rien à vous dire.* Yes, I have two complaints to make, one of your ladyship, the other of myself. You tell me nothing of lady Harriet: ¹ have you no tongue, or the French no eyes? or are her eyes employed in nothing but seeing? What a vulgar employment for a fine woman's eyes after she is risen from her toilet! I declare I will ask no more questions—What is it to me, whether she is admired or not? I should know how charming she is, though all Europe were blind. I hope I am not to be told by any barbarous nation upon earth what beauty and grace are!

For myself, I am guilty of the gout in my elbow; the left—witness my hand-writing. Whether I caught cold by the deluge in the night, or whether the bootikins, like the water of Styx, can only preserve the parts they surround, I doubt they have saved me but three weeks, for so long my reckoning has been out. However, as I feel nothing in my feet, I flatter myself that this Pindaric transition will not be a regular ode, but a fragment, the more valuable for being imperfect.

Now for my gazette.—Marriages—Nothing done. Intrigues—More in the political than civil way. Births—Under par since lady B * * * left off breeding. Gaming—Low water. Deaths—Lord Morton,² lord Wentworth,³ duchess Douglas.⁴

¹ Lady Harriet Stanhope, third daughter of the earl of Harrington, who, with the countess of Ailesbury and the hon. Mrs. Damer, had gone to Paris to meet General Conway upon his return from Germany. [Ed.]

² Sholto Charles Douglas, fifteenth earl of Morton, born 1732; died 25th Sept. 1774.

³ Edward Noel, viscount Wentworth, of Wellsborough, county of Leicesters, baron Wentworth, of Nettlestead. [Ed.]

⁴ Catherine, daughter of Henry, earl of Clarendon and Rochester, and wife of Charles, third duke of Douglas. [Ed.]

Election stock—More buyers than sellers. Promotions—Mr. Wilkes as high as he can go—*A-propos*, he was told the lord chancellor intended to signify to him that the king did not approve the city's choice: he replied, "Then I shall signify to his lordship, that I am at least as fit to be lord mayor as he to be lord chancellor." This being more gospel than every thing Mr. Wilkes says, the formal approbation was given.

Mr. Burke has succeeded in Bristol, and sir James Peachey will miscarry in Sussex. But what care you, madam, about our parliament? You will see the *rentrée* of the old one, with songs and epigrams into the bargain. We do not shift our parliaments with so much gaiety. Money in one hand, and abuse in t'other—those are all the arts we know. *Wit and a gamut* I don't believe ever signified a parliament,⁵ whatever the glossaries may say; for they never produce pleasantry and harmony. Perhaps you may not taste this Saxon pun, but I know it will make the Antiquarian Society die with laughing.

Expectation hangs on America. The result of the general assembly is expected in four or five days.⁶ If one may believe the papers, which one should not believe, the other side of the waterists are not *doux comme des moutons*, and yet we do intend to eat them. I was in town on Monday; the duchess of B * * * graced our loo, and made it as rantipole as a quaker's meeting. *Loois Quinze*,⁷ I believe, is arrived by this time, but I fear without *quinze louis*.

Your herb-snuff and the four glasses are lying in my warehouse, but I can hear of no ship going to Paris. You are now at Fontainebleau, but not thinking of Francis I. the queen of Sweden, and Monaldelschi. It is terrible that one cannot go to courts that are gone! You have supped with the chevalier de Boufflers: did he act every thing in the world, and sing every thing in the world, and laugh at every thing in the world? Has madame de Cambis sung to you *Sans depit, sans légèreté*?⁸ Has lord Cholmondeley delivered my paquet? I hear I have hopes of madame d'Olonne. Gout

⁵ *Wetenagemot*. [Or.]

⁶ The resolutions of the first American congress did not, however, arrive until the 30th of the month. [Ed.]

⁷ This was a cant name given to a lady who was very fond of loo, and who had lost much money at that game. [Or.]

⁸ The first words of a favourite French air. [Or.]

or no gout, I shall be little in town till after Christmas. My elbow makes me bless myself that I am not at Paris. Old age is no such uncomfortable thing, if one gives one's self up to it with a good grace, and don't drag it about

To midnight dances and the public show.

If one stays quietly in one's own house in the country, and cares for nothing but one's self, scolds one's servants, condemns every thing that is new, and recollects how charming a thousand things were formerly that were very disagreeable, one gets over the winters very well, and the summers get over themselves.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 11, 1774.

I AM sorry there is still time, my dear lord, to write to you again; and that though there is, I have so little to amuse you with. One is not much nearer news for being within ten miles of London than if in Yorkshire; and besides, whatever reaches us, lady Greenwich catches at the rebound before me, and sends you before I can. Our own circle furnishes very little. Dowagers are good for propagating news when planted, but have done with sending forth suckers. Lady Blandford's coffee-house is removed to town, and the duchess of Newcastle's is little frequented, but by your sister Anne, lady Browne, and me. This morning indeed I was at a very fine concert at old Franks's at Isleworth, and heard Leoni,¹ who pleased me more than any thing I have heard these hundred years. There is a full melancholy melody in his voice, though a *falsezza*, that nothing but a natural voice ever compasses. Then he sung songs of Handel in the genuine simple style, and did not put one in pain like rope-dancers. Of the opera I hear a dismal account; for I did not go to it to sit in our box like an old king dowager by myself. Garrick is treating the town, as it deserves and likes to be treated, with scenes, fire-works, and his own writing. A good new play I

¹ Leoni, a celebrated singer of that day, considered one of the best in England. He was a Jew, and a singer at the synagogues, from which he is said to have been dismissed for singing in the 'Messiah' of Handel. [Ed.]

never expect to see more, nor have seen since *The Provoked Husband*, which came out when I was at school.

**** is dead, they say by his own hand: I don't know wherefore. I was told it was a great political event. If it is, our politics run as low as our plays. From town I heard that lord Bristol was taken speechless with a stroke of the palsy. If he dies, madam Chudleigh² must be tried by her peers, as she is certainly either duchess or countess.

Mr. Conway and his company are so pleased with Paris, that they talk of staying till Christmas. I am glad; for they will certainly be better diverted there than here.

Your lordship's most faithful servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 12, 1774.

I HAVE received a delightful letter from you of four sheets, and another since. I shall not reply to the campaigning part (though much obliged to you for it), because I have twenty other subjects more pressing to talk of. The first is to thank you for your excessive goodness to my dear old friend—she has some indiscretions, and *you must not have any to her*; but she has the best heart in the world, and I am happy, at her great age, that she has spirits enough not to be always upon her guard. A bad heart, especially after long experience, is but too apt to overflow *inwardly* with prudence. At least, as I am but too like her, and have corrected too few of my faults, I would fain persuade myself that some of them flow from a good principle—but I have not time to talk of myself, though you are much too partial to me, and give me an opportunity; yet I shall not take it.

Now for English news, and then your letter again.

There has been a great mortality here; though death has

² The duchess of Kingston, against whom an indictment for bigamy was found on the 8th December, she having married the duke of Kingston, having been previously married to the hon. Augustus John Hervey, then living, and who, by the death of his brother, became earl of Bristol, an event which took place in March 1775; so that whichever marriage might be decided to be legitimate, she must be, at all events, a peeress. [Ed.]

rather been *prié* than a volunteer. ****, as I told lady Ailesbury last post, shot himself. He is dead, totally undone. Whether that alone was the cause, or whether he had not done something worse, I doubt. I cannot conceive that, with his resources, he should have been hopeless—and, to suspect him of delicacy, impossible !

A ship is arrived from America, and I doubt with very bad news, for none but trifling letters have yet been given out—but I am here, see nobody that knows any thing, and only hear by accident from people that drop in. The sloop that is to bring the result of the general assembly is not yet come. There are indeed rumours, that both the non-importation and even non-exportation have been decreed, and that the flame is universal. I hope this is exaggerated ! yet I am told the stocks will fall very much in a day or two.

I have nothing to tell lady Ailesbury, but that I hear a deplorable account of the opera. There is a new puppet-show at Drury-lane, as fine as scenes can make it, called *The Maid of the Oaks*,¹ and as dull as the author could not help making it.

Except M. D'Herouville, I know all the people you name. C. I doubt, by things I have heard formerly, may have been a *concessionnaire*. The duke, your *protecteur*,² is *médiocre* enough ; you would have been more pleased with his wife. The chevalier's³ *bon-mot* is excellent, and so is he. He has as much *buffonnerie* as the Italians, with more wit and novelty. His impromptu verses often admirable. Get madame du Deffand to show you his Embassy to the princess Christine; and his verses on his eldest uncle, beginning *Si monsieur de Veau*. His second uncle has parts, but they are not so natural. Madame de Caraman is a very good kind of woman, but has not a quarter of her sister's parts. Madame de Mirepoix is *the* agreeable woman of the world when she pleases—but there must not be a card in the room. Lord * * * * has acted like himself ; that is, unlike any body else.

¹ Written by lieutenant-general the right hon. John Burgoyne, whose conduct at Saratoga, during the American war, became the subject of so much animated discussion. [Ed.]

² The duc de la Valiere; of whom Mr. Conway had said, that, when presented to him, "his reception was what might be called good, but rather *de protection*." [Or.]

³ The chevalier de Boufflers. [Or.]

You know, I believe, that I think him a very good speaker ; but I have little opinion of his judgment and knowledge of the world, and a great opinion of his affectation and insincerity. The abbé Raynal, though he wrote that fine work on the commerce *des deux Indes*, is the most tiresome creature in the world. The first time I met him was at the dull baron d'Olbach's : we were twelve at table : I dreaded opening my mouth in French, before so many people and so many servants : he began questioning me, cross the table, about our colonies, which I understand as little as I do Coptic. I made him signs I was deaf. After dinner, he found I was not, and never forgave me. Mademoiselle de Raucoux I never saw till you told me madame du Deffand said she was *demoniaque sans chaleur* ! What painting ! I see her now. Le Kain sometimes pleased me, oftener not. Molé is charming in genteel, or in pathetic comedy, and would be fine in tragedy, if he was stronger. Prévillo is always perfection. I like his wife in affected parts, though not animated enough. There was a delightful woman who did the lady Wishforts, I don't know if there still, I think her name mademoiselle Drouin ; and a fat woman, rather elderly, who sometimes acted the *soubrette*. But you have missed the Dumenil, and Caillaut ! What irreparable losses ! Madame du Deffand, perhaps—I don't know—could obtain your hearing the Clairon—yet the Dumenil was infinitely preferable.

I could now almost find in my heart to laugh at you for liking Boutin's garden.⁴ Do you you know, that I drew a plan of it, as the completest absurdity I ever saw. What ! a river that wriggles at right angles through a stone gutter, with two tansy puddings that were dug out of it, and three or four beds in a row, by a corner of the wall, with samples of grass, corn, and of *en friche*, like a tailor's paper of patterns ! And you like this ! I will tell Park-place—Oh ! I had forgot your audience in dumb show—Well, as madame de Sevigné said, "*Le roi de Prusse, c'est le plus grand roi du monde* still."⁵ My love to the old parliament ; I don't love new ones.

⁴ See another ludicrous description of this garden in a letter to Mr. Chute. [Or.]

⁵ This alludes to Mr. Conway's presentation to the king of France, Louis XVI. at Fontainebleau, of which in his letter to Mr. Walpole he gives the following account:

"On St. Hubert's day in the morning I had the honour of being presented

I went several times to madame de Monconseil's, who is just what you say. Mesdames de Tingri et de la Vauguion I never saw : madame de Noailles once or twice, and enough. You say something of madame de Mallet, which I could not read ; for, by the way, your brother and I agree that you are grown not to write legibly : is that lady in being ? I knew her formerly. Madame de Blot⁶ I know, and monsieur de Paulmy I know, but for heaven's sake who is col. Conway ?⁷ Mademoiselle Sanadon is *la sana donna*, and not mademoiselle *Celadon*,⁸ as you call her. Pray assure my good monsieur Schoualow of my great regard : he is one of the best of beings.

I have said all I could, at least all I should. I reserve the rest of my paper for a postscript ; for this is but Saturday, and my letter cannot depart till Tuesday : but I could not for one minute defer answering your charming volumes, which interest me so much. I grieve for lady Harriet's⁹ swelled face, and wish for both their sakes she could transfer it to her father. I assure her I meant nothing by desiring you to see the verses to the princess Christine,¹⁰ wherein there is very profane mention of a pair of swelled cheeks. I hear nothing of madame d'Olonne.¹¹ Oh ! make madame du Deffand show you the sweet portrait of madame de Prie, the duke of Bourbon's mistress. Have you seen madame de Monaco, and the remains of madame de Brionne ? If you wish to see Mrs. A * * *, ask for the princesse de Ligne. If you have seen monsieur de Maurepas, you have seen the late

to the king : 'twas a good day, and an excellent deed. You may be sure I was well received, the French are so polite ! and their court so polished !—The emperor, indeed, talked to me every day ; so did the king of Prussia regularly and much : but that was not to be compared to the extraordinary reception of his most Christian majesty, who, when I was presented, did not stop, nor look to see what sort of an animal was offered to his notice, but carried his head, as it seemed, somewhat higher, and passed his way." [Or.]

⁶ Wife of M. Chavigny de Blot, attached to the service of the duke of Orleans : she was sister to the comte d'Hennerly, who died at St. Domingo, where he was commander-in-chief. [Ed.]

⁷ An officer in the French service. [Or.]

⁸ Mademoiselle Sanadon, a lady who lived with madame du Deffand. [Or.]

⁹ Lady Harriet Stanhope, afterwards married to lord Foley, was at this time at Paris with her father the earl of Harrington. [Or.]

¹⁰ By the chevalier de Boufflers. [Or.]

¹¹ A beautiful enamel miniature of madame d'Olonne. [Or.]

lord Hardwicke.¹² By your not naming him, I suppose the duc de Nivernois is not at Paris. Say a great deal for me to M. de Guisnes. You will not see my passion, the duchess de Chatillon. If you see madame de Nivernois, you will think the duke of Newcastle is come to life again. Alas! where is my postscript?

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Nov. 27, 1774.

I HAVE received your delightful plump packet with a letter of six pages, one from madame du Deffand, the Eloges, and the *Lit de justice*. Now, observe my gratitude: I appoint you my resident at Paris; but you are not to resemble all our ministers abroad, and expect to live at home, which would destroy *my lord Castlecomer's*¹ view in your staying at Paris. However, to prove to you that I have some gratitude that is not totally selfish, I will tell you what little news I know, before I answer your letter; for English news, to be sure, is the most agreeable circumstance in a letter from England.

On my coming to town yesterday, there was nothing but more deaths—don't you think we have the plague? The bishop of Worcester, lord Breadalbane, lord Strathmore. The first fell from his horse, or with his horse, at Bath, and the bishopric was incontinently given to bishop North.

America is still more refractory, and I doubt will outvote the ministry. They have picked general Gage's pocket of three pieces of cannon,² and intercepted some troops that were going to him. Sir William Draper is writing plans of pacification in our newspapers; and lord Chatham flatters himself that he shall be sent for when the patient is given over; which I don't think at all unlikely to happen. My poor nephew is very political too: so we shall not want mad-doctors. *A-propos*, I hear Wilkes says he will propose M * * * * for speaker.

¹² He means from their personal resemblance. [Or.]

¹ A cant phrase of Mr. Walpole's. [Or.]

² The seizure of Fort William and Mary, near Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, by the provincial militia, in which they found 106 barrels of gunpowder, several pieces of cannon, &c. [Ed.]

The ecclesiastical court are come to a resolution that the duchess of Kingston is Mrs. Harvey : and the sentence will be public in a fortnight. It is not so certain that she will lose the estate. Augustus³ is not in a much more pleasant predicament than she is. I saw lord Bristol last night : he looks perfectly well, but his speech is much affected, and his right hand.

Lady Lyttelton, who, you know, never hears any thing that has happened, wrote to me two days ago, to ask if it would not be necessary for *you* to come over for the meeting of the parliament. I answered, very gravely, that to be sure you ought : but though *sir James Morgan* threatened you loudly with a petition, yet, as it could not be heard till after Christmas, I was afraid you would not be persuaded to come sooner. I hope she will inquire who *sir James Morgan* is, and that people will persuade her she has made a confusion about sir James * * * *. Now for your letter.

I have been in the *chambre de parlement*, I think they call it the *grande chambre* ; and was shown the corner in which the monarchs sit, and do not wonder you did not guess where it was they sat. It is just like the dark corner, under the window, where I always sat in the house of commons. What has happened, has past exactly according to my ideas. When one king breaks one parliament, and another another, what can the result be but despotism ? or of what else is it a proof ? If a Tory king displaces his father's Whig lord chamberlain, neither lord chamberlain has the more or the less power over the theatres and court mournings and birth-day balls. All that can arrive is, that the people will be still more attached to the old parliament, from this seeming restitution of a right—but the people must have some power before their attachment can signify a straw. The old parliament, too, may some time or other give itself more airs on this confession of right ; but that too cannot be but in a minority, or when the power of the Crown is lessened by reasons that have nothing to do with the parliament. I will answer for it, they will be too *grateful* to give umbrage to their restorer. Indeed, I did not think the people would be so quick-sighted at once, as to see the distinction of old and new was without a difference. Methinks France and England are like the land and the sea ; one gets a little sense when the other loses it.

³ Augustus Hervey, to whom she was first married. [Or.]

I am quite satisfied with all you tell me about my friend. My intention is certainly to see her again, if I am able; but I am too old to lay plans, especially when it depends on the despot gout to register or cancel them. It is even melancholy to see her, when it will probably be but once more; and still more melancholy, when we ought to say to one another, in a different sense from the common, *au revoir*! However, as mine is a pretty cheerful kind of philosophy, I think the best way is to think of dying, but to talk and act as if one was not to die; or else one tires other people, and dies before one's time. I have truly all the affection and attachment for her that she deserves from me, or I should not be so very thankful as I am for your kindness to her. The Choiseuls will certainly return at Christmas, and will make her life much more agreeable. The duchess has as much attention to her as I could have; but that will not keep me from making her a visit.

I have only seen, not known, the younger madame de Boufflers. For her musical talents, I am little worthy of them—yet I am just going to lady Bingham's to hear the Bastardella, whom, though the first singer in Italy, Mrs. Yates could not or would not agree with;⁴ and she is to have twelve hundred pounds for singing twelve times at the Pantheon, where, if she had a voice as loud as lord Clare's, she could not be heard. The two *bons-mots* you sent me are excellent; but, alas! I had heard them both before; consequently your own, which is very good too, pleased me much more. M. de Stainville I think you will not like: he has sense, but has a dry military harshness, that at least did not suit me—and then I hate his barbarity to his wife.⁵

You was very lucky indeed to get one of the sixty tickets.⁶ Upon the whole, your travels have been very fortunate, and the few mortifications amply compensated. If a duke⁷ has been spiteful when your back was turned, a hero-king has been all courtesy. If another king has been silent, an emperor has been singularly gracious. Frowns or silence may happen to any body:

⁴ To sing at the opera. [Or.]

⁵ Upon a suspicion of gallantry, she was confined for life. [Or.]

⁶ To see the *lit de justice* held by Louis XVI., when he recalled the parliament of Paris banished by Louis XV. at the instigation of the chancellor Maupeou, and suppressed the new one of their creation. [Or.]

⁷ The duke de Choiseul. [Or.]

the smiles have been addressed to you particularly.—So was the ducal frown indeed—but would you have earned a smile at the price set on it? One cannot do right and be always applauded—but in such cases are not frowns tantamount?

As my letter will not set forth till the day after to-morrow, I reserve the rest for my additional news, and this time *will* reserve it.

St. Parliament's day, 29th, after breakfast.

THE speech is said to be firm, and to talk of the *rebellion*⁸ of our province of Massachusetts. No sloop is yet arrived to tell us how to call the rest. Mr. Van is to move for the expulsion of Wilkes; which will distress, and may produce an odd scene. Lord Holland is certainly dead; the papers say, Robinson too, but that I don't know:—so many deaths of late make report kill to right and left.

TO THE HON H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Dec. 15, 1774.

As I wrote to lady Ailesbury but on Tuesday, I should not have followed it so soon with this, if I had nothing to tell you but of myself. My gout is never dangerous, and the shades of them not important. However, to dispatch this article at once, I will tell you, that the pain I felt yesterday in my elbow made me think all former pain did not deserve the name. Happily the torture did not last above two hours; and, which is more surprising, it is all the real pain I have felt; for though my hand has been as sore as if flayed, and that both feet are lame, the bootkins demonstrably prevent or extract the sting of it, and I see no reason not to expect to get out in a fortnight more. Surely, if I am laid up but one month in two years, instead of five or six, I have reason to think the bootkins sent from heaven.

⁸ The king's speech announced "that a most daring spirit of resistance and disobedience to the law unhappily prevailed in the province of Massachusetts Bay;" and further, "the king's firm and steadfast resolution to withstand every attempt to weaken or impair the supreme authority of *this* legislature over all the dominions of his crown; the maintenance of which he considered as essential to the dignity, the safety, and welfare of the British empire." [Ed.]

The long expected sloop is arrived at last, and is, indeed, a *man of war*! The general congress have voted,

A non-importation.

A non-exportation.

A non-consumption.

That, in case of hostilities committed by the troops at Boston, the several provinces will march to the assistance of their countrymen.

That the cargoes of ships now at sea shall be sold on their arrival, and the money arising thence given to the poor at Boston.

That a letter, in the nature of a petition of rights, shall be sent to the king; another to the house of *commons*; a third to the people of England; a demand of repeal of all the acts of parliament affecting North America passed during this reign, as also of the Quebec-bill: and these resolutions not to be altered till such repeal is obtained.

Well, I believe you do not regret being neither in parliament nor in administration! As you are an idle man, and have nothing else to do, you may sit down and tell one a remedy for all this. Perhaps you will give yourself airs, and say you was a prophet, and that prophets are not honoured in their own country.—Yet, if you have any inspiration about you, I assure you it will be of great service—we are at our wit's end—which was no great journey.—Oh! you conclude lord Chatham's crutch will be supposed a wand, and be sent for.—They might as well send for *my* crutch; and they should not have it; the stile is a little too high to help them over. His lordship is a little fitter for raising a storm than laying one, and of late seems to have lost both virtues. The Americans at least have acted like men, gone to the bottom at once, and set the whole upon the whole. Our conduct has been that of pert children: we have thrown a pebble at a mastiff, and are surprised it was not frightened. Now we must be worried by it, or must kill the guardian of the house, which will be plundered the moment little master has nothing but the old nurse to defend it. But I have done with reflections; you will be fuller of them than I.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Dec. 26, 1774.

I BEGIN my letter to-day, to prevent the fatigue of dictating two to-morrow. In the first and best place, I am very near recovered; that is, though still a mummy, I have no pain left, nor scarce any sensation of gout except in my right hand, which is still in complexion and shape a lobster's claw. Now, unless any body can prove to me that three weeks are longer than five months and a half, they will hardly convince me that the bootikins are not a cure for fits of the gout, and a very short cure, though they cannot prevent it: nor perhaps is it to be wished they should; for if the gout prevents every thing else, would not one have something that does? I have but one single doubt left about the bootikins, which is, whether they do not weaken my breast: but as I am sensible that my own spirits do half the mischief, and that, if I could have held my tongue, and kept from talking and dictating letters, I should not have been half so bad as I have been, there remains but half due to bootikins on the balance: and surely the ravages of the last long fit, and two years more in age, ought to make another deduction. Indeed, my forcing myself to dictate my last letter to you almost killed me; and since the gout is not dangerous to me, if I am kept perfectly quiet, my good old friend must have patience, and not insist upon letters from me but when it is quite easy to me to send them. So much for me and my gout. I will not endeavour to answer such parts of your last letters as I can in this manner, and considering how difficult it is to read *your* writing in a dark room.

I have not yet been able to look into the French harangues you sent me. Voltaire's verses to Robert Covelle are not only very bad, but very contemptible.

I am delighted with all the honours you receive, and with all the amusements they procure you, which is the best part of honours. For the glorious part, I am always like the man in Pope's *Donne*,

“Then happy he who shows the tombs, said I.”

That is, they are least troublesome there. The *serenissime* ¹

¹ The prince de Conti. [Or.]

you met at Montmorency is one of the least to my taste; we quarrelled about Rousseau, and I never went near him after my first journey. Madame du D. will tell you the story, if she has not forgotten it.

It is supposed here, that the new proceedings of the French parliament will produce great effects: I don't suppose any such thing. What America will produce I know still less; but certainly something very serious. The merchants have summoned a meeting for the second of next month, and the petition from the congress to the king is arrived. The heads have been shown to lord D * * * *; but I hear one of the agents is against presenting it: yet it is thought it will be delivered, and then be ordered to be laid before parliament. The whole affair has already been talked of there on the army and navy-days; and Burke, they say, has shone with amazing wit and ridicule on the late inactivity of Gage, and his losing his cannon and straw; on his being entrenched in a town with an army of observation; with that army being, as sir William Meredith had said, an asylum for magistrates, and to secure the port. Burke said, he had heard of an asylum for debtors and whores, never for magistrates; and of ships, never of armies, securing a port. This is all there has been in parliament, but elections. C * * * F * * * 's place did not come into question. Mr. * * * *, who is one of the new elect, has opened, but with no success. There is a seaman, Luttrell, that promises much better.

I am glad you like the duchess de Lauzun:² she is one of my favourites. The hotel du Chatelet promised to be very fine, but was not finished when I was last at Paris. I was much pleased with the person that slept against St. Lambert's poem: I wish I had thought of the nostrum, when Mr. * * *, a thousand years ago, at Lyons, would read an epic poem to me just as I had received a dozen letters from England. St. Lambert is a great jackanapes, and a very tiny genius. I suppose the poem was *The Seasons*, which is four fans spun out into a Georgic. If I had not been too ill, I should have thought of bidding you hear midnight mass on Christmas-eve in madame du Deffand's tribune, as I used to do. To be sure, you know that her apartment was part

² She became duchesse de Biron upon the death of her husband's grandfather, the marechal duc de Biron, and perished, on the scaffold, during the tyranny of Robespierre. [Or.]

of madame du Montespan's, whose arms are on the back of the grate in madame du Deffand's own bed-chamber. *A-propos*, ask her to show you madame de Prie's picture, M. le Duc's mistress—I am very fond of it—and make her tell you her history.

I have but two or three words more. Remember my parcel of letters from madame du D., and pray remember this injunction, not to ruin yourselves in bringing presents. A very slight fairing of a guinea or two obliges as much, is more fashionable, and not a moment sooner forgotten than a magnificent one; and then you may very cheaply oblige the more persons; but as the sick fox, in Gay's Fables, says (for one always excepts oneself),

“A chicken too might do me good ——”

I allow you to go as far as three or even five guineas for a snuff-box for me: and then, as * * * * * told the king when he asked for the reversion of the Light-house for two lives, and the king reproached him with having always advised him against granting reversions; he replied, “Oh sir, but if your majesty will give me this, I will take care you shall never give away another.”

Adieu, with my own left hand.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Dec. 31, 1774.

No child was ever so delighted to go into breeches, as I was this morning to get on a pair of cloth shoes as big as Jack Harris's: this joy may be the spirits of dotage—but what signifies whence one is happy? Observe, too, that this is written with my own *right* hand, with the bootikin actually upon it, which has no distinction of fingers: so I no longer see any miracle in Buck=inger, who was famous for writing without hands or *feet* [as it was indifferent which one uses, provided one has a pair of either]. Take notice, I write so much better without fingers than with, that I advise *you* to try a bootikin. To be sure, the operation is a little slower; but to a prisoner, the duration of his amusement is of far more consequence than the vivacity of it.

Last night, I received your very kind, I might say *your* letter *tout court*, of Christmas-day. By this time I trust you are quite

out of pain about me. My fit has been as regular as possible ; only, as if the bootikins were post-horses, it made the grand tour of all my limbs in three weeks. If it will always use the same expedition, I am content it should take the journey once in two years. You must not mind my breast : it was always the weakest part of a very weak system ; yet did not suffer now by the gout, but in consequence of it ; and would not have been near so bad, if I could have kept from talking and dictating letters. The moment I am out of pain, I am in high spirits ; and though I never take any medicines, there is one thing absolutely necessary to be put into my mouth—a gag. At present the town is so empty that my tongue is a sinecure.

I am well acquainted with the Bibliothèque du Roi, and the medals, and the prints. I spent an entire day in looking over the English portraits, and kept the librarian without his dinner till dark night, till I was satisfied. Though the Choiseuls¹ will not *acquaint* with you, I hope their abbé Barthelemi² is not put under the same quarantine. Besides great learning, he has infinite wit and *polissonnerie*, and is one of the best kind of men in the world. As to the grandpapa,³ *il ne nous aime pas nous autres*, and has never forgiven lord Chatham. Though exceedingly agreeable himself, I don't think his taste exquisite.—Perhaps I was piqued ; but he seemed to like * * * better than any of us. Indeed, I am a little afraid that my dear friend's impetuous zeal may have been a little too prompt in pressing you upon them *d'abord* :—but don't say a word of this—it is her great goodness.—I thank you a million of times for all yours to her :—she is perfectly grateful for it.

The chevalier's⁴ verses are pretty enough. I own I like Saurin's⁵ much better than you seem to do. Perhaps I am prejudiced by the curse on the chancellor at the end.

¹ Mr. Conway and the ladies of his party had met with the most flattering and distinguished reception at Paris from every body but the duc and duchesse de Choiseul, who rather seemed to decline their acquaintance. [Or.]

² The author of the *Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis*. [Or.]

³ A name given to the duc de Choiseul by madame du Deffand. [Or.]

⁴ Verses written by the Chevalier de Boufflers, to be presented by madame du Deffand to the duke and duchess of Choiseul. [Or.]

⁵ They were addressed to M. de Malesherbes, then premier president de la cour des aides. [Or.]

Not a word of news here. In a sick room one hears all there is, but I have not heard even a lie : but as this will not set out these three days, it is to be hoped some charitable Christian will tell a body one. Lately indeed we heard that the king of Spain had abdicated ; but I believe it was some stock-jobber that had deposed him.

Lord George Cavendish, for my solace in my retirement, has given me a book, the history of his own Furness-abbey, written by a Scotch ex-Jesuit.⁶ I cannot say that this unnatural conjunction of a Cavendish and a Jesuit has produced a lively colt ; but I found one passage worth any money. It is in an extract of a constable's journal kept during the civil war ; and ends thus : " And there was never heard of such troublesome and distracted times as these five years have been, *but especially for constables.*" It is so natural, that *inconvenient to my lord Castlecomer* is scarce a better proverb.

Pray tell lady Ailesbury that though she has been so very good to me, I address my letters to you rather than to her, because my pen is not always upon its guard, but is apt to say whatever comes into its nib ; and then if she peeps over your shoulder, I am *censé* not to know it. Lady Harriet's wishes have done me great good : nothing but a father's gout could be obdurate enough to resist them. My Mrs. D. says nothing to me ; but I give her intentions credit, and lay her silence on you.

January 1, 1775 ; and a happy new year !

I WALK ! I walk ! walk alone !—I have been five times quite round my rooms to-day, and my month is not up ! The day after to-morrow I shall go down into the dining-room ; the next week to take the air ; and then if Mrs. * * * * is very pressing, why, I don't know what may happen. Well ! but you want news, there are none to be had. They think there is a ship lost with Gage's dispatches. Lady Temple gives all her diamonds to Miss Nugent.⁷ Lord Pigot lost £400 the other night at princess

⁶ "The Antiquities of Furness ; or an Account of the Royal Abbey of St. Mary, in the vale of Nightshade, near Dalton, in Furness." London, 1774. 4to. This volume, which was dedicated to lord George Cavendish, was written by Thomas West, the antiquary, who was likewise the author of a "Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire." [Ed.]

⁷ Mary, only daughter and heiress of Robert, earl Nugent, of the kingdom

Amelia's. Miss Davis⁸ has carried her cause against Mrs. Yates, and is to sing again at the opera. This is all my coffee-house furnished this morning.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Jan. 9, 1775.

I EVERY day intended to thank you for the copy of Nell Gwyn's letter, till it was too late; the gout came, and made me moult my goose-quill. The letter is very curious, and I am as well content as with the original.

It is lucky you do not care for news more recent than the Reformation. I should have none to tell you; nay, nor earlier neither. Mr. Strutt's¹ second volume I suppose you have seen. He shewed me two or three much better drawings from pictures in the possession of Mr. Ives. One of them made me very happy: it is a genuine portrait of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, and is the individual same face as that I guessed to be his in my marriage of Henry VI. They are infinitely more like each other, than any two modern portraits of one person by different painters. I have been laughed at for thinking the skull of duke Humphrey at St. Alban's proved my guess; and yet it certainly does, and is the more like, as the two portraits represent him very bald, with only a ringlet of hair, as monks have. Mr. Strutt is going to engrave his drawings.

Yours faithfully.

of Ireland. She was married, on the 16th April 1775, to George Grenville, second earl Temple, who then assumed, by royal permission, the surnames of Nugent and Temple before that of Grenville, and the privilege of signing Nugent before all titles whatsoever. [Ed.]

⁸ Cecilia Davis, known in Italy by the name of L'Inglesina, first appeared at the Opera in 1773. She was considered on the continent as second only to Gabrieli, and in England is said to have been surpassed only by Mrs. Billington. She was pupil of the celebrated Hasse; and, after having taught several crowned heads, died at an advanced age, and in very distressed circumstances, in the course of the present year (1836). [Ed.]

¹ Joseph Strutt's "Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits, &c. of the Inhabitants of England, from the arrival of the Saxons

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Jan. 15, 1775.

You have made me very happy by saying your journey to Naples is laid aside. Perhaps it made too great an impression on me; but you must reflect, that all my life I have satisfied myself with your being perfect, instead of trying to be so myself. I don't ask you to return, though I wish it: in truth there is nothing to invite you. I don't want you to come and breathe fire and sword against the Bostonians, like that second duke of Alva, the inflexible lord G * * * G * * *; or to anathematize the court and all its works, like the incorruptible B., who scorns lucre, except when he can buy a hundred thousand acres from naked Caribs for a song. I don't want you to do any thing like a party-man. I trust you think of every party as I do, with contempt, from lord Chatham's mustard-bowl down to lord Rockingham's hartshorn. All, perhaps, will be tried in their turns, and yet, if they had genius, might not be mighty enough to save us—From some ruin or other I think nobody can, and what signifies an option of mischiefs?

An account is come of the Bostonians having voted an army of sixteen thousand men, who are to be called *minute-men*, as they are to be ready at a minute's warning. Two directors or commissioners, I don't know what they are called, are appointed. There has been too a kind of mutiny in the 5th regiment. A soldier was found drunk on his post. Gage, in his time of *danger*, thought rigour necessary, and sent the fellow to a court-martial. They ordered 200 lashes. The general ordered them to improve their sentence. Next day it was published in the Boston Gazette. He called them before him, and required them on oath to abjure the communication: three officers refused. Poor G. is to be scape-goat, not for this, but for what was a reason against

till the reign of Henry VIII., with a short Account of the Britons during the government of the Romans." London, 1774, 5, and 6. 3 vols. 4to.

This accomplished artist, so well known for the above and several similar works, the results of the assiduity he displayed in tracing our national antiquities from illuminated MSS. in our public libraries, &c. died in London 15th October 1802, aged 55. [Ed.]

employing him, incapacity. I wonder at the precedent ! Howe is talked of for his successor.—Well, I have done with *you* !—Now I shall go gossip with lady Ailesbury.

You must know, madam, that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle-tree, a weeping-willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been new-christened Helicon. Ten years ago there lived a madam ***, an old rough humourist who passed for a wit ; her daughter who passed for nothing, married to a captain * * *, full of good-natured officiousness. These good folks were friends of miss Rich,¹ who carried me to dine with them at * * *, now Pindus. They caught a little of what was then called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan were forced to go abroad to retrieve. Alas ! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth muse, as romantic as mademoiselle Scuderi, and as sophisticated as Mrs. V * * * *. The captain's fingers are loaded with cameos, his tongue runs over with *virtù*, and that both may contribute to the improvement of their own country, they have introduced *bouts-rimés* as a new discovery. They hold a Parnassus-fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase dressed with pink ribbons and myrtles receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival ; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest compositions, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope * * *,² kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle, with—I don't know what. You may think this a fiction, or exaggeration. Be dumb, unbelievers ! The collection is printed, published.³—Yes, on my faith, there are *bouts-rimés* on a buttered muffin, made by her grace the duchess of Northumberland ; receipts to make them by Corydon the venerable, alias * * * ; others very pretty, by lord Palmerston ; some by Lord C * * * ; many by Mrs. * * * herself, that have no fault but wanting metre ; and immortality promised to her without end or measure. In short, since folly, which never ripens to madness but in this hot climate, ran distracted,

¹ Daughter of sir Robert Rich, and sister to the second wife of George lord Lyttelton. [Or.]

² Mrs. Miller. [Or.]

³ They were published under the title of "Poetical Amusements at a Villa near Bath." An edition appeared in 1781, in four volumes. [Ed.]

there never was any thing so entertaining or so dull—for you cannot read so long as I have been telling.

January 17.

BEFORE I could finish this, I received your dispatches by sir T. Clarges, and a most entertaining letter in three tomes. It is being very dull, not to be able to furnish a quarter so much from your own country—but what can I do? You are embarked in a new world, and I am living on the scraps of an old one, of which I am tired. The best I can do is to reply to your letter, and not attempt to amuse you when I have nothing to say. I think the parliament meets to-day, or in a day or two—but I hope you are coming.—Your brother says so, and Madame du Deffand says so; and sure it is time to leave Paris, when you know ninety of the inhabitants. There seems much affectation in those that will not know you;⁴ and affectation is always a littleness—it has been even rude; but to be sure the rudeness one feels least is that which is addressed to one before there has been any acquaintance.

Ninon came,⁵ because, on madame du Deffand's mentioning it, I concluded it a new work, and am disappointed. I can say this by heart. The picture of madame de Prie, which you don't seem to value, and so madame du Deffand says, I believe I shall dispute with you; I think it charming, but when offered to me years ago, I would not take it—it was now given to you a little *à mon intention*.

I am sorry that, amongst all the verses you have sent me, you should have forgotten what you commend the most, *Les trois exclamations*: I hope you will bring them with you. Voltaire's are intolerably stupid, and not above the level of officers in garrison. Some of M. de Pezay's are very pretty, though there is too much of them; and in truth I had seen them before. Those on madame de la Valiere pretty too, but one is a little tired of Venus and the Graces. I am most pleased with your own—and if you have a mind to like them still better, make madame du Deffand show you mine,⁶ which are neither French, nor measure, nor metre. She is unwilling to tell me so; which diverts me. Yours are really genteel and new.

⁴ The duke de Choiseul. [Or.]

⁵ The life of Ninon de l'Enclos. [Or.]

⁶ These lines do not appear. [Or.]

I envy you the Russian anecdotes⁷ more than M. de Chamfort's fables, of which I know nothing; and as you say no more, I conclude I lose not much. The stories of sir Charles⁸ are so far not new to me, that I heard them of him from abroad after he was mad: but I believe no mortal of his acquaintance ever heard them before; nor did they at all correspond with his former life, with his treatment of his wife, or his history with Mrs. Woffington, *qui n'était pas dupe*. I say nothing on the other stories you tell me of billets dropped,⁹ *et pour cause*.

I think I have touched all your paragraphs, and have nothing new to send you in return. In truth, I go no where but into private rooms; for I am not enough recovered to re-launch into the world, when I have so good an excuse for avoiding it. The bootikins have done wonders; but even two or three such victories will cost too dear. I submit very patiently to my lot. I am old and broken, and it never was my system to impose upon myself when one can deceive nobody else. I have spirits enough for my use, that is, amongst my friends and contemporaries: I like young people and their happiness for every thing but to live with; but I cannot learn their language, nor tell them old stories, of which I must explain every step as I go. Politics, the proper resource of age, I detest—I am contented, but see few that are so—and I never will be led by any man's self-interest. A great scene is opening, of which I cannot expect to see the end; I am pretty sure not a happy end—so that, in short, I am determined to think the rest of my life but a postscript: and as this has been too long an one, I will wish you good night, repeating what you know already, that the return of you three is the most agreeable prospect I expect to see realized. Adieu!

⁷ The account of the revolution in Russia which placed Catherine II. on the throne, by M. de la Rulhiere, now published. Mr. Conway had heard it read in manuscript in a private society. [Or.]

⁸ Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. [Or.]

⁹ This alludes to circumstances Mr. Conway mentions as having taken place at a ball at Versailles. [Or.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 11, 1775.

I THANK you, dear sir, for your kind letter, and the good account you give of yourself—nor can I blame your change from writing—that is, transcribing, to reading—sure you ought to divert yourself rather than others—though I should not say so, if your pen had not confined itself to transcripts.

I am perfectly well, and heed not the weather; though I wish the seasons came a little oftener into their own places instead of each others. From November, till a fortnight ago, we had warmth that I should often be glad of in summer—and since we are not sure of it then, was rejoiced when I could get it. For myself, I am a kind of delicate Hercules; and though made of paper, have, by temperance, by using as much cold water inwardly and outwardly as I can, and by taking no precautions against catching cold, and braving all weathers, become capable of suffering by none. My biennial visitant, the gout, has yielded to the bootikins, and staid with me this last time but five weeks in lieu of five months. Stronger men perhaps would kill themselves by my practice, but it has done so long with me, I shall trust to it.

I intended writing to you on Gray's Life,¹ if you had not prevented me. I am charmed with it, and prefer it to all the biography I ever saw. The style is excellent, simple, unaffected; the method admirable, artful, and judicious. He has *framed* the fragments [as a person said] so well, that they are fine drawings, if not finished pictures. For my part, I am so interested in it, that I shall certainly read it over and over. I do not find that is likely to be the case with many *yet*. Never was a book, which people pretended to expect so much with impatience, less devoured—at least in London, where quartos are not of quick digestion. Faults are found, I hear, at Eton with the Latin Poems for false quantities—no matter—they are equal to the English—and can one say more?

At Cambridge, I should think the book would both offend much

¹ The Poems of Mr. Gray. To which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings, by W. Mason, M.A. York, 1775. [Ed.]

and please; at least if they are as sensible to humour as to ill-humour; and there is orthodoxy enough to wash down a camel. The Scotch and the Reviewers will be still more angry, and the latter have not a syllable to pacify them. So they who wait for their decisions will probably miss of reading the most entertaining book in the world—a punishment which they who trust to such wretched judges deserve; for who are more contemptible than such judges, but they who pin their faith on them?

In answer to you, yourself, my good sir, I shall not subscribe to your censure of Mr. Mason, whom I love and admire, and who has shown the greatest taste possible in the execution of this work. Surely he has *said* enough in gratitude, and *done* far beyond what gratitude could demand. It seems delicacy in expatiating on the legacy; particularizing more gratitude would have lessened the evidence of friendship, and made the justice done to Gray's character look more like a debt. He speaks of him in slender circumstances, not as distressed: and so he was till after the deaths of his parents and aunts; and even then surely not rich. I think he does somewhere say that he meant to be buried with his mother, and not specifying any other place confirms it. In short, Mr. Mason shall never know your criticisms; he has a good heart, and would feel them, though certainly not apprized that he would merit them. A man who has so called out all his friend's virtues, could not want them himself.

I shall be much obliged to you for the prints you destine for me. The earl of Cumberland I have, and will not rob you of. I wish you had been as successful with Mr. G. as with Mr. T. I mean, if you are not yet paid—now is the time, for he has sold his house to the duke of Marlborough—I suppose he will not keep his prints long: he changes his pursuits continually and extravagantly—and then sells to indulge new fancies.

I have had a piece of luck within these two days. I have long lamented our having no certain piece written by Anne Boleyn's brother, lord Rochford. I have found a very pretty copy of verses by him in the new published volume of the *Nugæ Antiquæ*, though, by mistake, he is called earl of, instead of viscount Rochford. They are taken from a MS. dated twenty-eight years after the author's death, and are much in the manner of lord Surrey's and Sir T. Wyat's poems. I should at first have doubted if they were not counterfeited, on reading my noble authors; but

then the blunder of *earl* for *viscount* would hardly have been committed. A little modernized and softened in the cadence, they would be very pretty.

I have got the rest of the Digby pictures, but at a very high rate. There is one very large of sir Kenelm, his wife, and two sons, in exquisite preservation, though the heads of him and his wife not so highly finished as those I have—yet the boys and draperies are so amazing that, together with the size, it is certainly the most capital miniature in the world: there are a few more, very fine, too. I shall be happy to shew them to you, whenever you Burnhamize—I mean before August, when I propose making my dear old blind friend a visit at Paris—nothing else would carry me thither. I am too old to seek diversions, and too indolent to remove to a distance by choice, though not so immovable as you to much less distance. Adieu! pray tell me what you hear is said of Gray's Life at Cambridge.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 25, 1775.

The least I can do, dear sir, in gratitude for the cargo of prints I have received to-day from you, is to send you a medicine. A pair of bootikins will set out to-morrow morning in the machine that goes from the Queen's-head in Gray's-inn-lane. To be certain, you had better send for them where the machine inns, lest they should neglect delivering them at Milton. My not losing a moment shews my zeal; but if you can bear a little pain, I should not press you to use them. I have suffered so dreadfully, that I constantly wear them to diminish the stock of gout in my constitution; but as your fit is very slight, and will not last, and as you are pretty sure by its beginning so late, that you will never have much; and as the gout certainly carries off other complaints, had not you better endure a little, when it is rather a remedy than a disease? I do not desire to be entirely delivered from the gout, for all reformatations do but make room for some new grievance: and, in my opinion, a disorder that requires no physician, is preferable to any that does. However, I have put relief in your power, and you will judge for yourself. You must tie them as

tight as you can bear, the flannel next to the flesh ; and, when you take them off, it should be in bed : rub your feet with a warm cloth, and put on warm stockings, for fear of catching cold while the pores are open. It would kill any body but me, who am, of adamant, to walk out in the dew in winter in my slippers in half an hour after pulling off the bootikins. A physician sent me word, good-naturedly, that there was danger of catching cold after the bootikins, unless one was careful. I thanked him, but told him my precaution was, never taking any. All the winter I pass five days in a week without walking out, and sit often by the fireside till seven in the evening. When I do go out, whatever the weather is, I go with both glasses of the coach down, and so I do at midnight out of the hottest room. I have not had a single cold, however slight, these two years.

You are too candid in submitting at once to my defence of Mr. Mason. It is true, I am more charmed with his book than I almost ever was with one. I find more people like the grave letters than those of humour, and some think the latter a little affected, which is as wrong a judgment as they could make ; for Gray never wrote any thing easily but things of humour. Humour was his natural and original turn—and though, from his childhood, he was grave and reserved, his genius led him to see things ludicrously and satirically ; and though his health and dissatisfaction gave him low spirits, his melancholy turn was much more affected than his pleasantry in writing. You knew him enough to know I am in the right—but the world in general always wants to be told how to think, as well as what to think. The print, I agree with you, though like, is a very disagreeable likeness, and the worst likeness of him. It gives the primness he had when under constraint ; and there is a blackness in the countenance which was like him only the last time I ever saw him, when I was much struck with it ; and, though I did not apprehend him in danger, it left an impression on me that was uneasy, and almost prophetic of what I heard but too soon after leaving him. Wilson drew the picture under much such impression, and I could not bear it in my room ; Mr. Mason altered it a little, but still it is not well, nor gives any idea of the determined virtues of his heart. It just serves to help the reader to an image of the person whose genius and integrity they must admire, if they are so happy as to have a taste for either.

The Peep into the Gardens at Twickenham is a silly little book, of which a few little copies were printed some years ago for presents, and which now sets up for itself as a vendable book. It is a most inaccurate, superficial, blundering account of Twickenham and other places, drawn up by a Jewess, who has married twice, and turned Christian, poetess, and authoress. She has printed her poems, too, and one complimentary copy of mine, which, in good breeding, I could not help sending her in return for violent compliments in verse to me. I do not remember that hers were good; mine I know were very bad, and certainly never intended for the press.

I bought the first volume of Manchester,¹ but could not read it; it was much too learned for me, and seemed rather an account of Babel than Manchester, I mean in point of antiquity. To be sure, it is very kind in an author to promise one the history of a country town, and give one a circumstantial account of the antediluvian world into the bargain. But I am simple and ignorant, and desire no more than I pay for. And then for my progenitors, Noah and the Saxons, I have no curiosity about them. Bishop Lyttelton² used to plague me to death about barrows, and tumuli, and Roman camps, and all those bumps in the ground that do not amount to a most imperfect ichnography; but, in good truth, I am content with all arts when perfected, nor inquire how ingeniously people contrived to do without them—and I care still less for remains of art that retain no vestiges of art. Mr. Bryant,³ who is sublime in unknown knowledge, diverted me more, yet I have not finished this work, no more than he has. There is a great ingenuity in discovering all his history [though it has never been written] by etymologies. Nay, he convinced me that the Greeks had totally mistaken all they went to learn in Egypt, &c. by doing, as the French do still, judge wrong by the ear—but as

¹ "The History of Manchester," by John Whitaker, B.D. London, 1771-3-5. 2 vols. 4to. This extraordinary book fully justifies Walpole's criticism. [Ed.]

² Dr. Charles Lyttelton, bishop of Carlisle, and president of the Society of Antiquaries. [Ed.]

³ Jacob Bryant, the learned author of "A New System; or an Analysis of Ancient Mythology." London, 4to., 1774-6, 3 vols. And of many other works. Though many of the conjectures made by him in his Mythology have been controverted, his reputation as a profound scholar was completely established by it. [Ed.]

I have been trying now and then for above forty years to learn something, I have not time to unlearn it all again, though I allow this our best sort of knowledge. If I should die when I am not clear in the History of the World below its first three thousand years, I should be at a sad loss on meeting with Homer and Hesiod, or any of those *moderns* in the Elysian fields, before I knew what I ought to think of them.

Pray do not betray my ignorance: the Reviewers and such literati have called me *a learned and ingenious gentleman*. I am sorry they ever heard my name, but don't let them know how irreverently I speak of the erudite, whom I dare to say they admire. These wasps, I suppose, will be very angry at the just contempt Mr. Gray had for them, and will, as insects do, attempt to sting, in hopes that their twelvepenny readers will suck a little venom from the momentary tremor they raise—but good night—and once more, thank you for the prints.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 5, 1775.

I AM extremely concerned, dear sir, to hear you have been so long confined by the gout. The painting of your house may, from the damp, have given you cold—I don't conceive that paint can affect one otherwise, if it does not make one sick, as it does me of all things. Dr. Heberden,¹ (as every physician, to make himself talked of, will set up some new hypothesis,) pretends that a damp house, and even damp sheets, which have ever been reckoned fatal, are wholesome: to prove his faith he went into his own new house totally unaided, and survived it. At Malvern, they certainly put patients into sheets just dipped in the spring—however, I am glad you have a better proof that dampness is not mortal, and it is better to be too cautious than too rash. I am perfectly well, and expect to be so for a year and a-half—I desire no more of the bootikins than to curtail my fits.

Thank you for the note from North's Life, though, having reprinted my Painters, I shall never have an opportunity of using

¹ Dr. William Heberden, the distinguished physician and medical writer, who died March 17th 1801, at the advanced age of 91. [Ed.]

it. I am still more obliged to you for the offer of an Index to my Catalogue—but, as I myself know exactly where to find every thing in it, and as I dare to say nobody else will want it, I shall certainly not put you to that trouble.

Dr. Glynn will certainly be most welcome to see my house, and shall, if I am not at home:—still I had rather know a few days before, because else he may happen to come when I have company, as I have often at this time of the year, and then it is impossible to let it be seen, as I cannot ask my company, who may have come to see it, too, to go out, that somebody else may see it, and I should be very sorry to have the Doctor disappointed. These difficulties, which have happened more than once, have obliged me to give every ticket for a particular day; therefore, if Dr. Glynn will be so good as to advertise me of the day he intends to come here, with a direction, I shall send him word what day he can see it.

I have just run through the two vast folios of Hutchins's Dorsetshire.² He has taken infinite pains; indeed, all but those that would make it entertaining.

Pray can you tell me any thing of some relations of my own, the Burwells? My grandfather married sir Jeffery Burwell's daughter, of Rongham, in Suffolk. Sir Jeffery's mother, I imagine, was daughter of a Jeffery Pitman, of Suffolk; at least I know there was such a man in the latter, and that we quarter the arms of Pitman. But I cannot find who lady Burwell, sir Jeffery's wife, was. Edmondson has searched in vain in the Herald's-office; and I have outlived all the ancient of my family so long, that I know not of whom to inquire, but you of the neighbourhood. There is an old walk in the Park at Houghton, called "Sir Jeffery's Walk," where the old gentleman used to teach my father (sir Robert) his book. Those very old trees encouraged my father to plant at Houghton. When people used to try to persuade him nothing would grow there, he said, why will not other trees grow as well as those in sir Jeffery's Walk?—Other trees have grown to some purpose! Did I ever tell you that my father was descended from lord Burleigh? The latter's

² The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset. London, 1774. Folio, 2 vols. A Biographical Account of the Author, the Rev. John Hutchins, by the Rev. G. Bingham, was published some few years since. [Ed.]

grand-daughter, by his son Exeter, married sir Giles Allington, whose daughter married sir Robert Crane, father of sir Edward Walpole's wife. I want but lady Burwell's name to make my genealogic tree shoot out stems every way. I have recovered a barony in fee, which has no defect but in being antecedent to any summons to Parliament, that of the Fitz Osbert's: and on my mother's side, it has mounted the Lord knows whither by the Philipps's to Henry VIIIth, and has sucked in Dryden for a great uncle: and by lady Philipps's mother, Darcy, to Edward III. and there I stop for brevity's sake—especially as Edward III. is a second Adam; who almost is not descended from Edward? as posterity will be from Charles II. and all the princes in Europe from James I. I am the first antiquary of my race. People don't know how entertaining a study it is. Who begot whom is a most amusing kind of hunting; one recovers a grandfather instead of breaking one's own neck—and then one grows so pious to the memory of a thousand persons one never heard of before. One finds how Christian names came into a family, with a world of other delectable erudition. You cannot imagine how vexed I was that Bloomfield³ died before he arrived at Houghton—I had promised myself a whole crop of notable ancestors—but I think I have pretty well unkennelled them myself. Adieu!

Yours ever.

P.S. I found a family of Whaplode in Lincolnshire who give our arms, and have persuaded myself that Whaplode is a corruption of Walpole, and came from a branch when we lived at Walpole in Lincolnshire.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, July 9, 1775.

THE whole business of this letter would lie in half a line. Shall you have room for me on Tuesday the 18th? I am putting myself into motion that I may go farther. I told madame du

³ The reverend Francis Blomefield, the author of an "*Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*," which was left unfinished by him, and continued by the reverend Charles Parkin, and is printed in five folio volumes. [Ed.]

Deffand how you had scolded me on her account, and she has charged me to thank you, and tell you how much she wishes to see you, too. I would give any thing to go——But the going!——However, I really think I shall—but I grow terribly affected with a *maladie de famille*, that of taking root at home.

I did but put my head into London on Thursday, and more bad news from America.⁴ I wonder when it will be bad enough to make folks think it so, without going on! The stocks indeed begin to grow a little nervous, and they are apt to affect other pulses. I heard this evening here that the Spanish fleet is sailed, and that we are not in the secret whither—but I don't answer for Twickenham gazettes, and I have no better. I have a great mind to tell you a Twickenham story; and yet it will be good for nothing, as I cannot send you the accent in a letter. Here it is, and you must try to set it to the right emphasis. One of our maccaronis is dead, a captain M * * * *, the tea-man's son. He had quitted the army, because his comrades called him captain Hyson, and applied himself to learn the classics and free-thinking; and was always disputing with the parson of the parish about Dido and his own soul. He married miss Paulin's warehouse, who had six hundred a-year; but, being very much out of conceit with his own canister, could not reconcile himself to her riding-hood—so they parted beds in three nights. Of late he has taken to writing comedies, which every body was welcome to hear him read, as he could get nobody to act them. Mrs. M * * * has a friend, one Mrs. V * * *, a mighty plausible good sort of body, who feels for every body, and a good deal for herself, is of a certain age, wears well, has some pretensions that she thinks very reasonable still, and a gouty husband. Well! she was talking to Mr. Rafter about captain M * * * a little before he died. "Pray, sir, does the captain ever communicate his writings to Mrs. M * * * ?"—"Oh dear, no, madam; he has a sovereign contempt for her understanding."—"Poor woman!"—"And pray, sir,—give me leave to ask you: I think I have heard that they very seldom sleep together?"—"Oh, never, madam! Don't you know all that?"—"Poor woman!"—I don't know whether you will laugh; but Mr. Rafter,⁵ who tells

⁴ Of the commencement of hostilities with the Americans at Lexington, on the 19th April preceeding. [Ed.]

⁵ Mr. Rafter, brother to Mrs. Clive. [Ed.]

a story better than any body, made me laugh for two hours. Good night.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

From t'other side of the water, August 17, 1775.

INTERPRETING your ladyship's orders in the most personal sense, as respecting the dangers of the sea, I write the instant I am landed. I did not, in truth, set out till yesterday morning at eight o'clock ; but finding the roads, horses, postillions, tides, winds, moons, and captain Fectors in the pleasantest humour in the world, I embarked almost as soon as I arrived at Dover, and reached Calais before the sun was awake ;—and here I am for the sixth time in my life, with only the trifling distance of seven-and-thirty years between my first voyage and the present. Well, I can only say in excuse, that I am got into the land of Struld-burgs, where one is never too old to be young, and where *la be-quille du père Barnabas* blossoms like Aaron's rod, or the Glastonbury thorn.

Now to be sure I shall be a little mortified, if your ladyship wanted a letter of news, and did not at all trouble your head about my navigation. However, you will not tell one so ; and therefore I will persist in believing that this good news will be received with transport at Park-place, and that the bells of Henley will be set a ringing. The rest of my adventures must be deferred till they have happened, which is not always the case of travels. I send you no compliments from Paris, because I have not got thither, nor delivered the bundle which Mr. Conway sent me. I did, as your ladyship commanded, buy three pretty little medallions in frames of filigraine, for our dear old friend.¹ They will not ruin you, having cost not a guinea and half ; but it was all I could find that was genteel and portable ; and as she does not measure by guineas, but attentions, she will be as much pleased as if you had sent her a dozen acres of Park-place. As they are in bas-relief, too, they are feelable, and that is a material circumstance to her. I wish the Diomedé had even so much as a pair of Nankin !

¹ Madame du Deffand. [Or.]

Adieu, toute la chère famille ! I think of October with much satisfaction ; it will double the pleasure of my return.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

Paris, August 20, 1775.

I HAVE been sea-sick to death ; I have been poisoned by dirt and vermin ; I have been stifled by heat, choked by dust, and starved for want of any thing I could touch : and yet, madam, here I am perfectly well, not in the least fatigued ; and, thanks to the rivelled parchments, formerly faces, which I have seen by hundreds, I find myself almost as young as when I came hither first in the last century. In spite of my whims, and delicacy, and laziness, none of my grievances have been mortal : I have borne them as well as if I set up for a philosopher, like the sages of this town. Indeed I have found my dear old woman so well, and looking so much better than she did four years ago, that I am transported with pleasure, and thank your ladyship and Mr. Conway for driving me hither. Madame du Deffand came to me the instant I arrived, and sat by me whilst I stripped and dressed myself ; for, as she said, since she cannot see, there was no harm in my being stark. She was charmed with your present, but was so kind as to be so much more charmed with my arrival, that she did not think of it a moment. I sat with her till half an hour after two in the morning, and had a letter from her before my eyes were open again. In short, her soul is immortal, and forces her body to bear it company.

This is the very eve of madame Clotilde's¹ wedding ; but, monsieur Turgot, to the great grief of lady M * * * *, will suffer no cost, but one banquet, one ball, and a play at Versailles. Count Viri gives a banquet, a *bal masqué*, and a firework. I think I shall see little but the last, from which I will send your ladyship a rocket in my next letter. Lady M * * * *, I believe, has had a private audience of the ambassador's leg, but *en tout bien et honneur*, and only to satisfy her ceremonious curiosity about any part of

¹ Madame Clotilde, sister of Louis XVI. Turgot was the new minister of finance, who, with his colleagues, endeavoured, in every practicable manner, to reduce the enormous expenditure of the country. [Ed.]

royal nudity. I am just going to her, as she is to Versailles; and I have not time to add a word more to the vows of your ladyship's

Most faithful.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, Sept. 8, 1775.

THE delays of the post, and its departure before its arrival, saved me some days of anxiety for lady Ailesbury, and prevented my telling you how concerned I am for her accident; though I trust by this time she has not even pain left. I feel the horror you must have felt during her suffering in the dark, and on the sight of her arm;¹ and though nobody admires her needle-work more than I, still I am rejoiced that it will be the greatest sufferer—However, I am very impatient for a farther account. Madame du Deffand, who, you know, never loves her friends by halves, and whose impatience never allows itself time to inform itself, was out of her wits because I could not explain exactly how the accident happened, and where. She wanted to write directly, though the post was just gone; and, as soon as I could make her easy about the accident, she fell into a new distress about her fans for madame de Marchais, and concludes they have been overturned, and broken too. In short, I never saw any thing like her—She has made engagements for me till Monday se'night; in which are included I don't know how many journeys into the country; and as nobody ever leaves her without her engaging them for another time, all these parties will be so many polypuses, that will shoot out into new ones every way. Madame de Jonsac,² a great friend of mine, arrived the day before yesterday, and madame du Deffand has pinned her down to meeting me at her house four times before next Tuesday, all parentheses, that are not to interfere with our other suppers; and from those suppers I never get to bed before two or three o'clock. In short, I need have the activity of a squirrel, and the strength of a Hercules, to go through my labours—not to count how many *démêlés*

¹ Lady Ailesbury had been overturned in her carriage at Park-place, and dislocated her wrist. [Or.]

² La comtesse de Jonsac, niece to the president Henault. [Ed.]

I have had to *raccommode*, and how many *memoires* to present against Tonton,³ who grows the greater favourite the more people he devours. As I am the only person who dare correct him, I have already insisted on his being confined in the Bastile every day after five o'clock. T'other night he flew at lady Barrymore's face, and I thought would have torn her eye out; but it ended in biting her finger. She was terrified; she fell into tears. Madame du Deffand, who has too much parts not to see every thing in its true light, perceiving that she had not beaten Tonton half enough, immediately told us a story of a lady, whose dog having bitten a piece out of a gentleman's leg, the tender dame, in a great fright, cried out, "Won't it make my dog sick?"

Lady Barrymore⁴ has taken a house. She will be glugged with conquests: I never saw any body so much admired. I doubt her poor little head will be quite upset.

Madame de Marchais⁵ is charming: eloquence and attention itself. I cannot stir for peaches, nectarines, grapes, and bury pears. You would think Pomona was in love with me. I am not so transported with N * * * cock and hen. They are a tabor and pipe that I do not understand. He mouths and she squeaks, and neither articulates. M. d'Enragues I have not seen. Upon the whole, I am much more pleased with Paris than ever I was; and, perhaps, shall stay a little longer than I intended. The Harry Grenvilles⁶ are arrived. I dined with them at madame de Viry's,⁷ who has completed the conquest of France by her behaviour on madame Clotilde's wedding, and by the

³ A favourite dog of madam du Deffand's. [Or.]

⁴ Lady Barrymore, third daughter of William, second earl of Harrington, and wife of Richard, sixth earl of Barrymore, who, dying in 1780, left issue Richard and Henry, each of whom became, successively, earl of Barrymore, a title which expired upon the death of the latter, in 1823. [Ed.]

⁵ Madame de Marchais, née Laborde, married to a valet-de-chambre to Louis XVI. From her intimacy with M. d'Angivillier, Directeur des Bâtimens, Jardins, &c. du Roi, she had the opportunity of obtaining the finest fruits and flowers—an opportunity of which she was in the habit of availing herself, that she might make them presents to her friends. [Ed.]

⁶ Henry Grenville, brother to the first earl Temple. He married miss Margaret Banks. [Or.]

⁷ Miss Harriet Speed. She had married M. le comte de Viry when he was minister at London from the court of Turin. She is one of the ladies to whom Gray's "Long Story" is addressed. [Or.]

fêtes she gave. Of other English I wot not, but grieve the Richmonds do not come.

I am charmed with doctor Bally ; nay, and with the king of Prussia—as much as I can be with a northern monarch. For your Kragen, I think we ought to procure a female one, and marry it to Ireland, that we may breed some new islands against we have lost America. I know nothing of said America. There is not a Frenchman that does not think us distracted.

I used to scold you about your bad writing, and perceive I have written in such a hurry, and blotted my letter so much, that you will not be able to read it : but consider how few moments I have to myself. I am forced to stuff my ears with cotton to get any sleep.—However, my journey has done me good. I have thrown off at least fifteen years. Here is a letter for my dear Mrs. D. * * * * from madame de * * * *, who thinks she doats on you all. Adieu !

P.S. I shall bring you two eloges of marshal Catinat, not because I admire them, but because I admire him, because I think him very like you.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, Oct. 6, 1775.

It will look like a month since I wrote to you ; but I have been coming, and am. Madame du Deffand has been so ill, that the day she was seized I thought she would not live till night. Her Herculean weakness, which could not resist strawberries and cream after supper, has surmounted all the *ups* and *downs* which followed her excess ; but her impatience to go every where and to do every thing has been attended with a kind of relapse, and another kind of giddiness : so that I am not quite easy about her, as they allow her to take no nourishment to recruit, and she will die of inanition, if she does not live upon it. She cannot lift her head from the pillow without *étourdissemens* ; and yet her spirits gallop faster than any body's, and so do her repartees. She has a great supper to-night for the duc de Choiseul, and was in such a passion yesterday with her cook about it, and that put Tonton into such a rage, that *nos dames de saint Joseph* thought

the devil or the philosophers were flying away with their convent ! As I have scarce quitted her, I can have had nothing to tell you. If she gets well, as I trust, I shall set out on the 12th ; but I cannot leave her in any danger—though I shall run many myself, if I stay longer. I have kept such bad hours with this *malade*, that I have had alarms of gout ; and bad weather, worse inns, and a voyage in winter, will ill suit me. The fans arrived at a propitious moment, and she immediately had them opened on her bed, and felt all the patterns, and had all the papers described. She was all satisfaction and thanks, and swore me to do her full justice to lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer. Lord Harrington and lady Harriet¹ are arrived ; but have announced and persisted in a strict invisibility.

I know nothing of my *chère patrie*, but what I learn from the London Chronicle ; and that tells me, that the trading towns are suing out *lettres de noblesse*, that is, entreating the king to put an end to commerce, that they may all be gentlemen. Here agriculture, economy, reformation, philosophy, are the *bon-ton* even at court. The two nations seem to have crossed over and figured in ; but as people that copy take the bad with the good, as well as the good with the bad, there was two days ago a great horse-race in the plain de Sablon, between the comte d'Artois,² the duc de Chartres,³ monsieur de Conflans, and the duc de Lauzun.⁴ The latter won by the address of a little English postillion, who is in such fashion, that I don't know whether the Academy will not give him for the subject of an *éloge*.

The duc de Choiseul, I said, is here ; and, as he has a second time put off his departure, *cela fait beaucoup de bruit*. I shall not be at all surprised if he resumes the reins, as (forgive me a pun) he has the *Reine* already. Messrs. de Turgot and Malesherbes certainly totter—but I shall tell you no more till I see you ; for though this goes by a private hand, it is so private, that I don't know it, being an English merchant's, who lodges in this hotel, and whom I do not know by sight : so, perhaps, I may

¹ Lady Harriet Stanhope, married, in March 1776, to Thomas, second baron Foley, mother of the present lord Foley. [Ed.]

² The present ex-king of France, Charles X. [Ed.]

³ Son of *Egalité*, duke of Orleans. [Ed.]

⁴ The duc de Lauzun, son of the duc de Gontaut, the maternal nephew to the duchesse de Choiseul. [Ed.]

bring you word of this letter myself. I flatter myself lady Ailesbury's arm has recovered its straightness and its cunning.

Madame du Deffand says I love you better than any thing in the world. If true, I hope you have not less penetration: if you have not, or it is not true, what would professions avail?—So I leave that matter in suspense. Adieu!

October 7.

MADAME du Deffand was quite well yesterday; and at near one this morning I left the duc de Choiseul, the duchess de Grammont, the prince and princess of Beauveau, princess of Poix,⁵ the maréchale de Luxembourg, duchess de Lauzun, ducs de Gontaut⁶ et de Chabot, and Caraccioli, round her chaise longue; and she herself was not a dumb personage. I have not heard yet how she has slept, and must send away my letter this moment, as I must dress to go to dinner with monsieur de Malesherbes at madame de Villegagnon's. I must repose a great while after all this living in company; nay, intend to go very little into the world again, as I do not admire the French way of burning one's candle to the very snuff in public. Tell Mrs. Damer, that the fashion now is to erect the *toupée* into a high detached tuft of hair, like a cockatoo's crest; and this *toupée* they call *la physionomie*—I don't guess why.

My *laquais* is come back from St. Joseph's, and says Marie de Vichy⁷ has had a very good night, and is quite well.—Philip,⁸ let my chaise be ready on Thursday.

⁵ Wife of the prince de Poix, eldest son of the maréchal de Mouchy, and daughter of the prince de Beauvau. The prince de Poix retired to this country on the breaking out of the French revolution, accompanied by his son, comte Charles de Noailles, who married the daughter of La Borde, the great banker of Paris. [Ed.]

⁶ The duc de Gontaut, brother to the maréchal duc de Biron, and father to the duc de Lauzun. The duchesse de Gontaut was a sister of the duchesse de Choiseul. [Ed.]

⁷ The maiden name of madame du Deffand. [Or.]

⁸ Mr. Walpole's valet-de-chambre. [Or.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 10, 1775.

I WAS very sorry to have been here, dear sir, the day you called on me in town. It is so difficult to uncloister you, that I regret not seeing you when you are out of your own *ambry*.

I have nothing new to tell you that is very old; but you can inform me of something within your own district. Who is the author, E. B. G. of a version of Mr. Gray's Latin Odes into English,¹ and of an Elegy on my wolf-devoured dog, poor Tory? a name you will marvel at in a dog of mine; but his godmother was the widow of alderman Parsons, who gave him at Paris to lord Conway, and he to me. The author is a poet, but he makes me blush, for he calls Mr. Gray and me *congenial pair*. Alas! I have no genius; and if any symptom of talent, so inferior to Gray's, that Milton and Quarles might as well be coupled together. We rode over the Alps, in the same chaise, but Pegasus drew on his side, and a cart-horse on mine. I am too jealous of his fame to let us be coupled together.

This author says he has lately printed at Cambridge a Latin translation of the Bards; I should be much obliged to you for it.

I do not ask you if Cambridge has produced any thing, for it never does. Have you made any discoveries? Has Mr. Lort? Where is he? Does Mr. Tyson engrave no more?

My plates for Strawberry advance leisurely. I am about nothing. I grow old and lazy, and the present world cares for nothing but politics, and satisfies itself with writing in newspapers. If they are not bound up and preserved in libraries, posterity will imagine that the art of printing was gone out of use. Lord Hardwicke² has indeed reprinted his heavy volume of

¹ Edward Burnaby Green, formerly of Bennet-college, but at that time a brewer in Westminster. [Or.] He likewise published translations of Pindar, Persius, Apollonius Rhodius, Anacreon, &c. [Ed.]

² Philip Yorke, second earl of Hardwicke, when lord Royston, published the "Letters to and from sir Dudley Carleton, knt., during his embassy in Holland, from January 1615-16 to December 1820." 4to. 1727; and, in 1775, published a second edition, "with large additions to the Historical Preface." [Ed.]

sir Dudley Carleton's Dispatches, and says I was in the wrong to despise it. I never met with any body that thought otherwise. What signifies raising the dead so often, when they die the next minute? Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

Arlington-street, Dec. 11, 1775.

DID you hear that scream?—Don't be frightened, madam; it was only the duchess of Kingston last Sunday was sevennight at chapel: but it is better to be prepared; for she has sent word to the house of lords, that her nerves are so bad she intends to scream for these two months, and therefore they must put off her trial. They are to take her throes into consideration to-day; and that there may be sufficient room for the length of her veil and train, and attendants, have a mind to treat her with Westminster-hall. I hope so, for I should like to see this *comédie larmoyante*; and, besides, I conclude, it would bring your ladyship to town. You shall have timely notice.

There is another comedy infinitely worth seeing—monsieur le Tessier. He is Preville, and Caillaud, and Garrick, and Weston, and Mrs. Clive, all together; and as perfect in the most insignificant part as in the most difficult. To be sure, it is hard to give up loo in such fine weather, when one can play from morning till night. In London, Pam can scarce get a house till ten o'clock. If you happen to see the general your husband, make my compliments to him, madam; his friend the king of Prussia is going to the devil and Alexander the Great.

TO THE REV. MR COLE.

Arlington-street, Dec. 14, 1775.

OUR letters probably passed by each other on the road, for I wrote to you on Tuesday, and have this instant received one from you, which I answer directly, to beg pardon for my incivility, nay, ingratitude, in not thanking you for your present of a whole branch of most respectable ancestors, the *Derehaughs*—why, the

Derehaughs alone would make gentlemen of half the modern peers, English or Irish. I doubt my journey to France was got into my head, and left no room for an additional quarter—but I have given it to Edmondson, and ordered him to take care that I am born again from the *Derehaughs*. This Edmondson has got a ridiculous notion into his head that another, and much ancier of my progenitors, sir Henry Walpole, married his wife Isabella Fitz-Osbert, when she was widow to sir Walter Jernegan; whereas, all the *Old Testament* says sir Walter married sir Henry's widow. Pray send me your authority to confound this gainsayer, if you know any thing particular of the matter.

I had not heard of the painting you tell me of. As those boobies, the Society of Antiquaries, have gotten hold of it, I wonder their *piety* did not make them bury it again, as they did the clothes of Edward I.¹ I have some notion that in Vertue's MSS. or somewhere else, I don't know where, I have read of some ancient painting at the Rose Tavern. This I will tell *you*—but Mr. Gough is such a bear, that I shall not satisfy him about it. That society, when they are puzzled, have recourse to me; and that would be so often, that I shall not encourage them. They may blunder as much as they please, from their heavy president down to the pert governor Pownall, who accounts for every thing immediately, before the creation or since. Say only to Mr. Gough, that I said I had not leisure now to examine Vertue's MSS. If I find any thing there, *you* shall know—but I have no longer any eagerness to communicate what I discover. When there was so little taste for MSS. which Mr. Gray thought worth transcribing, and which were so valuable, would one offer more pearls?

Boydel brought me this morning another number of the Prints from the pictures at Houghton. Two or three in particular are most admirably executed—but alas! it will be twenty years before the set is completed. That is too long to look forward at any age!—and at mine!—Nay, people will be tired in a quarter of the time. Boydel, who knows this country, and still more this town, thinks so, too. Perhaps there will be newer, or at

¹ The Society of Antiquaries, having obtained permission to do so, had, on the 2d May 1774, opened the tomb of Edward I. in Westminster. The body was found in perfect preservation, and most superbly attired. The garments were, of course, replaced in the tomb. [Ed.]

least more fashionable ways of engraving, and the old will be despised—or, which is still more likely, nobody will be able to afford the expense. Who would lay a plan for any thing in an overgrown metropolis hurrying to its fall?

I will return you Mr. Gough's letter when I get a frank. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Jan. 26, 1776.

I HAVE deferred answering your last letter, dear sir, till I cannot answer with my own hand. I made a pilgrimage at Christmas to Queen's Cross, at Ampthill, was caught there by the snow, imprisoned there for a fortnight, and sent home bound hand and foot by the gout. The pain, I suppose, is quite frozen, for I have had none; nothing but inflammation and swelling, and they abate. In reality, this is owing to the bootikins, which, though they do not cure the gout, take out its sting. You, who are still more apt to be an invalid, feel, I fear, this Hyperborean season; I should be glad to hear you did not.

I thought I had at once jumped upon a discovery of the object of the painted room at the Rose Tavern, but shall not plume myself upon my luck till I have seen the chamber, because Mr. Gough's account seems to date the style of the painting earlier than will serve my hypothesis. I had no data to go upon but the site having belonged to the family of Tufton (for I do not think the description at all answers to the taking of Francis I., nor is it at all credible that there should be arms in the painting, and yet neither those of France or Austria). I turned immediately to lord Thanet's pedigree, in Collins's peerage, and found at once an heroic adventure performed by one of the family, that accords remarkably with the principal circumstance. It is the rescue of the elector Palatine, son of our queen of Bohemia, from an ambuscade laid for him by the duke of Lorraine. The arms, Or and *Gules, I thought were those of Lorraine, which I since find are Argent and Gules. The Argent indeed may be turned yellow by age, as Mr. Gough says he does not know whether the crescent is red or black. But the great impediment is, that this

achievement of a Tufton was performed in the reign of Charles II. Now in that reign, when we were become singularly ignorant of chivalry, anachronisms and blunders might easily be committed by a modern painter, yet I shall not adhere to my discovery, unless I find the painting correspond with the style of the modern time to which I would assign it; nor will I see through the eyes of my hypothesis, but fairly. I shall now turn to another subject. Mr. Astle, who has left me off ever since the fatal era of Richard III. for no reason that I can conceive but my having adopted his discovery, which for aught I know may be a reason with an antiquary, lately sent me the attainder of George duke of Clarence, which he has found in the Tower and printed; and on it, as rather glad to confute me and himself, than to have found a curiosity, he had written two or three questions which tended to accuse Richard of having forged the instrument, though to the instrument itself is added another, which confirms my acquittal of Richard of the murder of Clarence—but, alas! Passion is a spying-glass that does but make the eyes of folly more blind. I sent him an answer, a copy of which I enclose.¹ Since

¹ TO THOMAS ASTLE, ESQ.

SIR,

Dec. 19th, 1775.

I am much obliged, and return you my thanks for the paper you have sent me. You have added a question to it, which, if I understand it, you yourself, sir, are more capable than any body of answering. You say, "Is it probable that this instrument was framed by Richard, duke of Gloucester?" If by *framed* you mean drawn up, I should think princes of the blood, in that barbarous age, were not very expert in drawing acts of attainder, though a branch of the law more in use then than since. But as I suppose you mean *forged*, you, sir, so conversant in writings of that age, can judge better than any man. You may only mean *forged by his order*. Your reading, much deeper than mine, may furnish you with precedents of *forged acts of attainder*; I never heard of one; nor does my simple understanding suggest the use of such a forgery, on cases immediately pressing; because an act of attainder being a matter of public notoriety, it would be revolting to the common sense of all mankind to plead such an one, if it had not really existed. If it could be carried into execution by force, the force would avail without the forgery, and would be at once exaggerated and weakened by it. I cannot, therefore, conceive why Richard should make use of so absurd a trick, unless that having so little to do in so short and turbulent a reign, he amused himself with treasuring up in the Tower a forged act for the satisfaction of those who, three hundred years afterwards, should be glad of discovering new flaws in his character. As there are men so bigotted to old legends, I am persuaded, sir, that you would please them by communi-

that, I have heard no more of him, nor shall, I suppose, till I see this new proof of Richard's guilt adopted into the annals of the Society, against which I have reserved some other stigmas for it.

eating your question to them. They would rejoice to suppose that Richard was more criminal than even the Lancastrian historians represent him; and just at this moment I don't know whether they would not believe that Mrs. Rudd assisted him. I, who am, probably, as absurd a bigot on the other side, see nothing in the paper you have sent me, but a confirmation of Richard's innocence of the death of Clarence. As the duke of Buckingham was appointed to superintend the execution, it is incredible that he should have been drowned in a butt of malmsey, and that Richard should have been the executioner. When a seneschal of England, or, as we call it, a lord high steward, is appointed for a trial, at least for execution, with all his officers, it looks very much as if, even in that age, proceedings were carried on with a little more formality than the careless writers of that time let us think. The appointment, too, of the duke of Buckingham for that office, seems to add another improbability [and a work of supererogation] to Richard's forging the instrument. Did Richard really do nothing but what tended to increase his unpopularity by glutting mankind with lies, forgeries, and absurdities, which every man living could detect?

I take this opportunity, sir, of telling you how sorry I am not to have seen you long, and how glad I shall be to renew our acquaintance, especially if you like to talk over this old story with me, though I own it is of little importance, and pretty well exhausted.

I am, sir, with great regard,
Your obliged humble servant.

[*Queries to be added to this letter.*]

If there was no such parliament held, would Richard have dared to forge an act for it?

Would Henry VII. never have reproached him with so absurd a forgery?

Did neither sir T. More nor lord Bacon ever hear of that forgery?

As Richard declared his nephew the earl of Warwick his successor, would he have done so, if he had forged an act of attainder of Warwick's father?

If it is supposed he forged the act, when he set aside Warwick, could he pretend that act was not known, when he declared him his heir? Would not so recent an act's being unknown have proved it a forgery? and if there had been no such parliament as that which forged it, would not that have proved it a double forgery? The act, therefore, and the parliament that passed it, must have been genuine and existed, though no other record appears. The distractions of the times, the evident insufficiency or partiality of the historians of that age, and the interest of Henry VII. to destroy all records that gave authority to the house of York and their title, account for our wanting evidence of that parliament.

Mr. Edmondson has found a confirmation of Isabella Fitzosbert having married Jernegan after Walpole. I forget where I found my arms of Fitzosberts. Though they differ from yours of sir Roger, the colours are the same, and they agree with yours of William Fitzosborne. There was no accuracy in spelling names even till much later ages; and you know that different branches of the same family made little variation in their coats.

I am very sorry for the death of poor Henshaw, of which I had not heard.

I am yours most sincerely.

P.S. The queries added to the letter to Mr. Astle were not sent with it, and, as I reserve them for a future answer, I beg you will show them to nobody.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, March 1, 1776.

I AM sorry to tell you that the curious old painting at the Tavern in Fleet-street is addled, by the subject turning out a little too old. Alas! it is not the story of Francis I. but of St. Paul. All the coats of arms that should have been French and Austrian, and that I had a mind to convert into Palatine and Lorrain, are the bearings of Pharisaic nobility. In short, Dr. Percy was here yesterday, and tells me that over Mr. Gough's imaginary Pavia is written *Damascus* in capital letters. Oh! our antiquaries!

Mr. Astle has at last called on me, but I was not well enough to see him. I shall return his visit when I can go out. I hope this will be in a week: I have no pain left, but have a codicil of nervous fevers, for which I am taking the bark. I have nothing new for you in our old way, and therefore will not unnecessarily lengthen my letter, which was only intended to cashier the old painting, though I hear the antiquaries still go on with having a drawing taken from it—Oh! our antiquaries!

TO DR. GEM.¹

Arlington-street, April 4, 1776.

It is but fair, when one quits one's party, to give notice to those one abandons—at least, modern patriots, who often imbibe their principles of honour at Newmarket, use that civility. You and I, dear sir, have often agreed in our political notions; and you, I fear, will die without changing your opinion. For my part, I must confess I am totally altered; and, instead of being a warm partisan of liberty, now admire nothing but despotism. You will naturally ask what place I have gotten, or what bribe I have taken? Those are the criterions of political changes in England—but, as my conversion is of foreign extraction, I shall not be the richer for it. In one word, it is the *relation du lit de justice*² that has operated the miracle. When two ministers³ are found so humane, so virtuous, so excellent, as to study nothing but the welfare and deliverance of the people; when a king listens to such excellent men; and when a parliament, from the basest, most interested motives, interposes to intercept the blessing, must I not change my opinions, and admire arbitrary power? or can I retain my sentiments, without varying the object?

Yes, sir, I am shocked at the conduct of the parliament—one would think it was an English one! I am scandalised at the speeches of the *avocat general*,⁴ who sets up the odious interests of the nobility and clergy against the cries and groans of the poor; and who employs his wicked eloquence to tempt the good

¹ An English physician long settled at Paris, no less esteemed for his professional knowledge, than for his kind attention to the poor who applied to him for medical assistance. [Or.]

² The first *lit de justice*, held by Louis XVI. [Or.]

³ Messrs. de Malesherbes and Turgot. [Or.] When the intrigues which had been set on foot to overthrow the administration of Turgot, accomplished that object, an event which took place shortly after the date of this letter, Louis XVI. requested Malsherbes to remain in office; but, when he refused to do so, seeing that his friend Turgot had been dismissed, Louis, conscious of the increased anxieties in which he should be involved, exclaimed, with a sigh, "*Que vous êtes heureux! que ne puis-je aussi quitter ma place!*" [Ed.]

⁴ Monsieur de Segurier. [Or.]

young monarch, by personal views, to sacrifice the mass of his subjects to the privileges of the few—But why do I call it eloquence? The fumes of interest had so clouded his rhetoric, that he falls into a downright Iricism.—He tells the king, that the intended tax on the proprietors of land will affect the property not only of the rich, but of the poor. I should be glad to know what is the property of the poor? Have the poor landed estates? Are those who have landed estates the poor? Are the poor that will suffer by the tax, the wretched labourers who are dragged from their famishing families to work on the roads?—But *it is* wicked eloquence when it finds a reason, or gives a reason for continuing the abuse.—The advocate tells the king, those abuses are *presque consacrés par l'ancienneté*.—Indeed, he says all that can be said for nobility, it is *consacrée par l'ancienneté*—and thus the length of the pedigree of abuses renders them respectable!

His arguments are as contemptible when he tries to dazzle the king by the great names of Henry Quatre and Sully, of Louis XIV. and Colbert, two couple whom nothing but a mercenary orator would have classed together. Nor, were all four equally venerable, would it prove any thing. Even good kings and good ministers, if such have been, may have erred; nay, may have done the best they could. They would not have been good, if they wished their errors should be preserved, the longer they had lasted.

In short, sir, I think this resistance of the parliament to the adorable reformation planned by Messrs. de Turgot and Malesherbes, is more phlegmatically scandalous than the wildest tyranny of despotism. I forget what the nation was that refused liberty when it was offered. This opposition to so noble a work is worse. A whole people may refuse its own happiness; but these profligate magistrates resist happiness for others, for millions, for posterity!—Nay, do they not half vindicate Maupeou, who crushed them?—And you, dear sir, will you now chide my apostacy? Have I not cleared myself to your eyes? I do not see a shadow of sound logic in all monsieur Seguier's speeches, but in his proposing that the soldiers should work on the roads, and that passengers should contribute to their fabric; though, as France is not so luxuriously mad as England, I do not believe passengers could support the expense of the roads. That argument; therefore, is like another

that the avocat proposes to the king, and which, he modestly owns, he believes would be impracticable.

I beg your pardon, sir, for giving you this long trouble; but I could not help venting myself, when shocked to find such renegade conduct in a parliament that I was rejoiced had been restored. Poor human kind! is it always to breed serpents from its own bowels? In one country, it chooses its representatives, and they sell it and themselves—in others, it exalts despots—in another, it resists the despot when he consults the good of his people!—Can we wonder mankind is wretched, when men are such beings? Parliaments run wild with loyalty, when America is to be enslaved or butchered. They rebel, when their country is to be set free!—I am not surprised at the idea of the devil being always at our elbows. They who invented him, no doubt could not conceive how men could be so atrocious to one another, without the intervention of a fiend. Don't you think, if he had never been heard of before, that he would have been invented on the late partition of Poland! Adieu, dear sir.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

April 16th, 1776.

You will be concerned, my good sir, for what I have this minute heard from his nephew, that poor Mr. Granger was seized at the communion table on Sunday with an apoplexy, and died yesterday morning at five. I have answered the letter with a word of advice about his MSS. that they may not fall into the hands of booksellers. He had been told by idle people so many gossiping stories, that it would hurt him and living persons, if all his collections were to be printed; for as he was incapable of telling an untruth himself, he suspected nobody else—too great goodness in a biographer.

Yours ever.

P.S. The whole world is occupied with the duchess of Kingston's trial.¹ I don't tell you a word of it, for you will not care about it these two hundred years.

¹ In Westminster Hall, before the House of Peers, for intermarrying with the duke of Kingston during the lifetime of her first husband. She was

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 1, 1776.

MR. GRANGER's papers have been purchased by lord Mount Stewart,¹ who has the frenzy of portrait as well as I ; and, though I am the head of the sect, I have no longer the rage of propagating it, nor would I on any account take the trouble of revising and publishing the MSS. Mr. Granger had drowned his taste for portraits in the ocean of biography ; and, though he began with elucidating prints, he at last only sought prints that he might write the lives of those they represented. His work was grown and growing so voluminous that an abridgment only could have made it useful to collectors. I am not surprised that you will not assist Dr. Kippis :² bishop Laud and William Prynne could never agree. You are very justly more averse to Mr. Masters, who is a pragmatic fellow, and at best troublesome.

If the agate knives you are so good as to recommend to me can be tolerably authenticated, have any royal marks, or, at least, old setting of the time, and will be sold for two guineas, I should not dislike having them : though I have scarce room to stick a knife and fork. But if I trouble you to pay for them, you must let me know all I owe you already, for I know I am in your debt for prints and pamphlets, and this new debt will make the whole considerable enough to be remitted. I have lately purchased three apostle-spoons to add to the one you was so kind as to give me. What is become of Mr. Essex ? does he never visit London ? I

found guilty ; but, pleading her privilege, was discharged without any punishment. [Ed.]

¹ John lord Mountstuart, created, 21st March 1796, Marquis of Bute. He died at Geneva, 16th November 1814, when the marquissate descended to his grandson, the present marquis. [Ed.]

² Dr. Andrew Kippis, well-known for the active part he took in producing the second edition of the "*Biographia Britannica*," of which he was the editor, and in a great measure the writer. He had applied to Cole for assistance ; and Walpole's satisfaction at Cole's refusal is to be accounted for by the fact of Kippis having threatened to expose sir Robert Walpole in the course of that work. Horace Walpole had called the *Biographia Britannica* an apology for every body. This Kippis happened to hear of ; upon which he retorted, "that the Life of Sir Robert Walpole should prove that the *Biographia* was not an apology for everybody." [Ed.]

wish I could tempt him thither or hither. I am not only thinking of building my offices in a collegiate style, for which I have a good design and wish to consult him, but I am actually wanting assistance at this very moment, about a smaller gallery that I wish to add this summer; and which, if Mr. Essex was here, he should build directly.

It is scarce worth asking him to take the journey on purpose, though I would pay for his journey hither and back, and would lodge him here for the necessary time. I can only beg you to mention it to him as an idle jaunt, the object is so trifling. I wish more that you could come with him: do you leave your poor parishioners and their souls to themselves? if you do, I hope Dr. Kippis will seduce them.¹

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 11, 1776.

I AM grieved, and feel for your gout; I know the vexations and disappointments it occasions, and how often it will return when one thinks it going or gone: it represents life and its vicissitudes. At last I know it makes me content when one does not feel actual pain,—and, what contents, may be called a blessing: but it is that sort of blessing that extinguishes hopes and views, and is not so luxurious but one can bear to relinquish it. I seek amusements now to amuse me; I used to rush into them, because I had an impulse and wished for what I sought. My want of Mr. Essex has a little of both kinds, as it is for an addition to this place, for which my fondness is not worn out. I shall be very glad to see him here either on the 20th or 21st of this month, and shall have no engagement till the 23d, and will gladly pay his journey. I am sorry I must not hope that you will accompany him.

Yours ever.

¹ Dr. Kippis was an eminent dissenting divine, minister of the chapel in Princes-street, Westminster. He published a tract, entitled, "*Vindication of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers*," &c. [Ed.]

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 30, 1776.

I WAS very glad to receive your letter, not only because always most glad to hear of you, but because I wished to write to you, and had absolutely nothing to say till I had something to answer. I have lain but two nights in town since I saw you, have been, else, constantly here, very much employed, though doing, hearing, knowing exactly nothing. I have had a gothic architect from Cambridge to design me a gallery, which will end in a mouse, that is, in an hexagon closet of seven feet diameter. I have been making a beauty-room, which was effected by buying two dozen of small copies of Sir Peter Lely, and hanging them up; and I have been making hay, which is not made, because I put it off for three days, as I chose it should adorn the landscape when I was to have company; and so the rain is come, and has drowned it.—However, as I can even turn calculator when it is to comfort me for not minding my interest, I have discovered that it is five to one better for me that my hay should be spoiled than not; for, as the cows will eat it if it is damaged, which horses will not, and as I have five cows and but one horse, is not it plain that the worse my hay is, the better? Do not you with your refining head go, and, out of excessive friendship, find out something to destroy my system. I had rather be a philosopher than a rich man; and yet have so little philosophy, that I had much rather be content than be in the right.

Mr. * * * and lady * * * have been here four or five days—so I had both content and exercise for my philosophy. I wish lady * * * was as fortunate! The Pembrokes, Churchills, Le Texier,¹ as you will have heard, and the Garricks, have been with us. Perhaps, if alone, I might have come to you—but you are all too healthy and harmonious. I can neither walk nor sing—nor, indeed, am fit for any thing but to amuse myself in a

¹ M. Le Tessier was a native of Lyons, where he was *directeur des fermes*. His admirable manner of reading, or rather of performing, solus, a comedy, in which there were no less than eight characters, is very characteristically described by Madame du Deffand, in her letters to Walpole, see vol. ii. p. 539. [Ed.]

sedentary trifling way. What I have most certainly not been doing, is writing any thing: a truth I say to you, but do not desire you to repeat. I deign to satisfy scarce any body else. Whoever reported that I was writing any thing, must have been so totally unfounded, that they either blundered by guessing without reason, or knew they lied—and that could not be with any kind intention; though saying I am going to do what I am not going to do, is wretched enough. Whatever is said of me without truth, any body is welcome to believe that pleases. In fact, though I have scarce a settled purpose about any thing, I think I shall never write any more. I have written a great deal too much, unless I had written better, and I know I should now only write still worse. One's talent, whatever it is, does not improve at near sixty—yet, if I liked it, I dare to say a good reason would not stop my inclination;—but I am grown most indolent in that respect, and most absolutely indifferent to every purpose of vanity. Yet without vanity I am become still prouder and more contemptuous. I have a contempt for my countrymen that makes me despise their approbation. The applause of slaves and of the foolish mad is below ambition. Mine is the haughtiness of an ancient Briton, that cannot write what would please this age, and would not, if he could. Whatever happens in America, this country is undone. I desire to be reckoned of the last age, and to be thought to have lived to be superannuated, preserving my senses only for myself and for the few I value. I cannot aspire to be traduced like Algernon Sydney, and content myself with sacrificing to him amongst my lares. Unalterable in my principles, careless about most things below essentials, indulging myself in trifles by system, annihilating myself by choice, but dreading folly at an unseemly age, I contrive to pass my time agreeably enough, yet see its termination approach without anxiety. This is a true picture of my mind; and it must be true, because drawn for you, whom I would not deceive, and could not, if I would. Your question on my being writing drew it forth, though with more seriousness than the report deserved—yet talking to one's dearest friend is neither wrong nor out of season. Nay, you are my best apology. I have always contented myself with your being perfect, or, if your modesty demands a mitigated term, I will say, unexceptionable. It is conical, to be sure, to have always been more solicitous about the virtue of one's

friend than about one's own—yet, I repeat it, you are my apology—though I never was so unreasonable as to make you answerable for my faults in return; I take them wholly to myself—— But enough of this. When I know my own mind, for hitherto I have settled no plan for my summer, I will come to you. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

July 23, 1776.

YOU are so good to me, my dear sir, that I am quite ashamed. I must not send back your charming present, but wish you would give me leave to pay for it, and I shall have the same obligation to you, and still more. It is beautiful in form and colours, and pleases me excessively. In the mean time, I have in a great hurry (for I came home but at noon to meet Mr. Essex) chosen out a few prints for you, such as I think you will like, and beg you to accept them: they enter into no one of my sets.

I am heartily grieved at your account of yourself, and know no comfort but submission. I was absent to see general Conway, who is far from well. We must take our lot as it falls! joy and sorrow is mixed till the scene closes. I am out of spirits, and shall not mend yours. Mr. Essex is just setting out, and I write in great haste, but am, as I have so long been,

Most truly yours.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 24, 1776.

I WROTE to you yesterday, dear sir, not only in great haste, but in great confusion, and did not say half I ought to have done for the pretty vase you sent me, and for your constant obliging attention to me. All I can say is, that gratitude attempted even in my haste and concern to put in its word: and I did not mean to pay you (which I hope you will really allow me to do), but to express my sensibility of your kindness. The

fact was, that to avoid disappointing Mr. Essex, when I had dragged him hither from Cambridge, I had returned hither precipitately, and yet late, from Park-place, whither I went the day before to see general Conway, who has had a little attack of the paralytic kind. You, who can remember how very long and dearly I have loved so near a relation and particular friend, and who are full of nothing but friendly sensations, can judge how shocked I was to find him more changed than I expected. I suffered so much in constraining and commanding myself, that I was not sorry, as the house was full of relations, to have the plea of Mr. Essex, to get away, and came to sigh here by myself. It is, perhaps, to vent my concern that I write now. Mr. Conway is in no manner of danger, is better, his head nor speech are affected, and the physicians, who barely allow the attack to be of the paralytic nature, are clear it is local, in the muscles of the face. Still has it operated such a revolution in my mind, as no time, *at my age*, can efface. It has at once damped every pursuit which my spirits had even now prevented me from being weaned from, I mean a *Virtù*.—It is like a mortal distemper in myself; for can amusements amuse, if there is but a glimpse, a vision, of out-living one's friends? I have had dreams in which I thought I wished for fame—it was not certainly posthumous fame at any distance: I feel, I feel it was confined to the memory of those I love. It seems to me impossible for a man who has no friends to do any thing for fame—and to me the first position in friendship is, to intend one's friends should survive one—but it is not reasonable to oppress you, who are suffering gout, with my melancholy ideas. Let me know as you mend. What I have said will tell you, what I hope so many years have told you, that I am very constant and sincere to friends of above forty years. I doubt Mr. Essex perceived that my mind was greatly bewildered. He gave me a direction to Mr. Penticross, who I recollect, Mr. Gray, not you, told me was turned a methodist teacher. He was a blue-coat boy, and came hither then to some of my servants, having at that age a poetic turn. As he has reverted to it, I hope the enthusiasm will take a more agreeable plea. I have not heard of him for many years, and thought he was settled somewhere near Cambridge: I find it is at Wallingford. I wonder those madmen and knaves do not begin to wear out, as their folly is no longer

new, and as knavery can turn its hand to any trade according to the humour of the age, which in countries like this is seldom constant.

Yours most faithfully.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Thursday 31.

THANK you for your letter. I send this by the coach. You will have found a new scene¹—not an unexpected one by you and me, though I do not pretend I thought it so near. I rather imagined France would have instigated or winked at Spain's beginning with us. Here is a solution of the Americans declaring themselves independent. Oh! the folly, the madness, the guilt of having plunged us into this abyss! Were we and a few more endued with any uncommon penetration?—No: they who did not see as far, *would* not. I am impatient to hear the complexion of to-day. I suppose it will, on the part of administration, have been a wretched farce of fear, daubed over with airs of bullying. You, I do not doubt, have acted like yourself, feeling for our situation, above insulting, and unprovoked but at the criminality that has brought us to this pass. Pursue your own path, nor lean to the court that may be paid to you on either side, as I am sure you will not regard their being displeased that you do not go as far as their interested views may wish.

If the court should receive any more of what they call good news, I think the war with France will be unavoidable. It was the victory at Long Island,² and the frantic presumption it occasioned, that has ripened France's measures—And now we are to awe them by pressing—an act that speaks our impotence!—which France did not want to learn!

I would have come to town, but I had declared so much I would not, that I thought it would look as if I came to enjoy the distress of the ministers—but I do not enjoy the distress of my country. I think we are undone—I have always thought so—

¹ On the opening of the parliament in the year 1776. [Or.]

² On the 27th August 1776, when the English, under the command of general Howe, defeated the Americans at Flat Bush, in Long Island. [Ed.]

whether we enslaved America or lost it totally—So we that were against the war could expect no good issue. If you do return to Park-place to-morrow, you will oblige me much by breakfasting here: you know it wastes you very little time.

I am glad I did not know of Mrs. Damer's sore throat till it is almost well. Pray take care and do not catch it.

Thank you for your care of me: I will not stay a great deal here, but at present I never was better in my life—and here I have no vexatious moments. I hate to dispute; I scorn to triumph myself, and it is very difficult to keep my temper when others do. I own I have another reason for my retirement, which is prudence. I have thought of it late, but, at least, I will not run into any new expense. It would cost me more than I care to afford to buy a house in town, unless I do it to take some of my money out of the stocks, for which I tremble a little. My brother is seventy; and if I live myself, I must not build too much on his life; and you know, if he fails, I lose the most secure part of my income. I refused from Holland, and last year from lord North, to accept the place for my own life; and having never done a dirty thing, I will not disgrace myself at fifty-nine. I should like to live as well as I have done; but what I wish more, is to secure what I have already saved for those I would take care of after me. These are the true reasons of my dropping all thought of a better house in town, and of living so privately here. I will not sacrifice my health to my prudence; but my temper is so violent, that I know the tranquillity I enjoy here in solitude, is of much more benefit to my health, than the air of the country is detrimental to it. You see I can be reasonable when I have time to reflect; but philosophy has a poor chance with me when my warmth is stirred—and yet I know, that an angry old man out of parliament, and that can do nothing but be angry, is a ridiculous animal.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 19, 1776.

I HAVE time but to write you a line, and it is as usual to beg your help in a sort of literary difficulty. I have received a letter

dated "Catherine-hall" from "Hen. Prescott," whom I doubt I have forgotten; for he begins, "Dear Sir," and I protest I cannot recollect him, though I ought. He says he wants to send me a few classical discourses, and he speaks with respect of my father, and, by his trembling hand, seems an old man. All these are reasons for my treating him with great regard; and, being afraid of hurting him, I have written a short and very civil answer, directed to the "Rev. Dr. Prescott." God knows whether he is a clergyman or a doctor, and perhaps I may have betrayed my forgetfulness; but I thought it was best to err on the over civil side. Tell me something about him; I dread his Discourses. Is he the strange man that a few years ago sent me a volume of an uncommon form, and of more uncommon matter? I suspect so.¹

You shall certainly have two or three of my prints by Mr. Essex when he returns hither and hence, and any thing else you will command. I am just now in great concern for the terrible death of general Conway's son-in-law, Mr. Damer, of which, perhaps, you in your solitude have not heard.—You are happy who take no part but in the past world, for the *mortui non mor- dent*, nor do any of the extravagant and distressing things that perhaps they did in their lives. I hope the gout, that persecutes even in a hermitage, has left you.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 9, 1776.

MAY I trouble you, dear sir, when you see our friend Mr. Essex, to tell him that the tower is covered in, and that whenever he has nothing to do, after this week, I shall be very glad to see him here, if he will only send me a line two or three days before-hand. I have carried this little tower higher than the round one, and it has an exceedingly pretty effect, breaking the long line of the house picturesquely, and looking very ancient. I

¹ Probably not *Hen. Prescott*, but *Kenrick Prescott*, the author of a 4to. volume, published at Cambridge in 1773, entitled, "Letters concerning Homer, the Sleeper, in Horace; with additional classic amusements." [Ed.]

must correct a little error in the spelling of a name in the pedigree you was so kind as to make out for me last year. The Derehaughs were not of Colton, but of Coulston-hall. This I discovered oddly this morning. On opening a patch-box that belonged to my mother, and which I have not opened for many years, I found an extremely small silver collaring, about this size, O, but broad and flat. I remember it was in an old satin bag of coins that my mother found in old Houghton when she first married. I call it a collar from the breadth ; for it would not be large enough for a fairy's lap-dog. It was probably made for an infant's little finger, and must have been for a ring, not a collar ; for I believe, though she was an heiress, young ladies did not elope so very early in those days. I never knew how it came into the family, but now it is plain, for the inscription on the outside is, " of Coulston-hall, Suff." and it is a confirmation of your pedigree. I have tied it to a piece of paper, with a long inscription, and it is so small, it will not be melted down for the weight ; and if not lost from its diminutive person, may remain in the family a long while, and be preserved when some gamester may spend every other bit of silver he has in the world ; at least, if one would make heir-looms now, one must take care that they have no value in them.

I fancy Mrs. Prescott is returned, for I have heard no more of the doctor. I wish you may be able to tell me your gout is gone.

Yours ever.

P.S. I was turning over Edmonson this evening, and observed an odd concurrence of circumstances in the present lord Carmarthen.¹ By his mother he is the representative of the great duke of Marlborough, and of old treasurer Godolphin,² by his father of the lord-treasurer duke of Leeds,³ and by his grandmother is

¹ Francis Godolphin, marquis of Carmarthen, only surviving son of Thomas, duke of Leeds ; and who, upon the death of his father, in 1789, succeeded to the dukedom. [Ed.]

² Mary, duchess of Leeds, wife of Thomas, fourth duke, was second daughter, and, eventually, sole heiress of Francis, earl of Godolphin, by Henrietta, duchess of Marlborough, eldest daughter and co-heir of the great duke of Marlborough. [Ed.]

³ Sir Thomas Osborne, lord high treasurer of England, the first duke of Leeds, who, having been successively honoured with the barony of Osborne,

descended from the lord-treasurer Oxford.⁴ Few men are so well ancestored in so short a compass of time.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 2, 1776.

THOUGH inclination, and consciousness that a man of my age, who is neither in parliament nor in business, has little to do in the world, keep me a good deal out of it, yet I will not, my dear lord, encourage you in retirement, to which, for the interest of your friends, you have but too much propensity. The manners of the age cannot be agreeable to those who have lived in something soberer times; nor do I think, except in France, where old people are never out of fashion, that it is reasonable to tire those whose youth and spirits may excuse some dissipation. Above all things, it is my resolution never to profess retirement, lest, when I have lost all my real teeth, the imaginary one, called a colt's, should hurry me back and make me ridiculous. But one never outlives all one's contemporaries; one may assort with them. Few Englishmen, too, I have observed, can bear solitude without being hurt by it. Our climate makes us capricious, and we must rub off our roughness and humours against one another. We have, too, an always increasing resource, which is, that though we go not to the young, they must come to us: younger usurpers tread on their heels, as they did on ours, and revenge us that have been deposed. They may retain their titles, like queen Christina, Sir M*** N***, and lord R***; but they find they have no subjects. If we could but live long enough, we should hear lord C***, Mr. S***, &c. complain of the airs and abominable hours of the youth of the age. You see, my dear lord, my easy philosophy can divert itself with any thing, even with visions; which perhaps is the best way of treating the great vision itself, life. For half one's time one should laugh *with* the world, the other half *at* it—and then it is hard if we want amusement.

the viscounty of Latimer, the earldom of Danby, and the marquise of Carmarthen, was, on the 4th May 1694, created duke of Leeds. [Ed.]

⁴ Elizabeth, the first wife of Peregrine Hyde, third duke of Leeds, was the youngest daughter of Robert Harley, the great earl of Oxford. [Ed.]

I am heartily glad, for your lordship's and lady Anne Conolly's sakes, that general Howe¹ is safe. I sincerely interest myself for every body you are concerned for. I will say no more on a subject on which I fear I am so unlucky as to differ very much with your lordship, having always fundamentally disapproved our conduct with America. Indeed, the present prospect of war with France, when we have so much disabled ourselves, and are exposed in so many quarters, is a topic for general lamentation, rather than for canvassing of opinions, which every man must form for himself: and I doubt the moment is advancing when we shall be forced to think alike, at least on the present.

I have not yet above a night at a time in town—but shall be glad to give your lordship and lady Strafford a meeting there whenever you please.

Your most faithful humble servant.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 9, 1776.

I KNOW you love an episcopal print, and, therefore, I send you one of two, that have just been given to me. As you have time and patience, too, I recommend you to peruse sir John Hawkins' History of Music.¹ It is true, there are five huge volumes in quarto, and perhaps you may not care for the expense; but surely you can borrow them in the University, and, though you may no more than I, delight in the scientific, there is so much about cathedral service, and choirs, and other old matters, that I am sure you will be amused with a great deal, particularly the two last volumes, and the fac-similes of old music in the first. I doubt it is a work that will not sell rapidly, but it must have a place in all great libraries.

¹ General sir William Howe, brother of the admiral, was then commander-in-chief of the British forces in America. He was married to a daughter of lady Ann Conolly, and consequently to a niece of lord Strafford. [Ed.]

¹ A work full of amusement, and deserving of Walpole's good word, notwithstanding the witty criticism which Dr. Calcott passed upon it, in his well-known catch:—"Have you Sir John Hawkins' History?" in which he makes the name of the rival work, "Burney's (*Burn-HIS*) History," express the fate which Hawkins' volumes deserved. [Ed.]

Pray tell Mr. Essex his ceiling is nearly finished, and very well executed.

As we have not had above two or three cold days, I hope the winter agrees with you, and that your complaints are gone off.

Yours most sincerely.

TO. MR. ALLAN.¹

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 9, 1776.

SIR,

As I have not the satisfaction of being acquainted with you, I must think myself very particularly obliged by your present of the two fine, and very like, prints of Bishop Trevor, and beg you will be pleased to accept my sincere thanks. If you ever happen to pass this way, I shall be extremely glad to shew you the collection you have so handsomely adorned, and to have an opportunity in person of assuring you, how gratefully

I am, sir, your most obliged
and obedient humble servant.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Feb. 20, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

You are always my oracle in any antique difficulties. I have bought at Mr. Ives's¹ sale (immensely dear) the shutters of the altar at Edmonds-bury: Mr. Ives had them from Tom Martin,² who married Peter Leneve's widow; so you see no

² George Allan, of Darlington, esq., an attorney and eminent antiquary, the proprietor of a private printing press, from which an amazing number of tracts relating to the county of Durham have been produced. A catalogue of the books and tracts printed at this press was published at Newcastle in 1818. [Ed.]

¹ John Ives, the antiquary, author of "Remarks upon the Garianonum of the Romans; the Site and Remains fixed and described." London, 1774; small 8vo. [Ed.]

² Tom Martin, of Palgrave, the well-known antiquary, whose "History of Thetford" was published in 1779, by Gough, who has prefixed to it a Biographical Sketch of the Author. [Ed.]

shutters can be better descended on the mother's side. Next to high birth, personal merit is something : in that respect, my shutters are far from defective : on the contrary, the figures in the inside are so very good, as to amaze me who could paint them here in the reign of Henry VI. ; they are worthy of the Bolognese school—but they have suffered in several places, though not considerably. Bowes is to repair them, under oath of only filling up the cracks, and restoring the peelings off, but without repainting or varnishing.

The possession of these boards, invaluable to me, was essential. They authenticate the sagacity of my guesses, a talent in an antiquary coequal with prophecy in a saint. On the outside is an archbishop, unchristened by the late possessors, but evidently archbishop Kempe, or the same person with the prelate in my Marriage of Henry VI.—and you will allow from the collateral evidence that it must be Kempe, as I have so certainly discovered another person in my picture. The other outside is a cardinal, called by Mr. Ives, Babington ; but I believe Cardinal Beaufort, *for* the lion of England stands by him, which a bastardly prince of the blood was more likely to assume than a true one. His face is not very like, nor very unlike, the face in my picture ; but this is shaven—but now comes the great point. On the inside, is Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, kneeling—not only as exactly resembling mine as possible, but with the same almost bald head, and the precisely same furred robe. An apostle-like personage stands behind him, holding a golden chalice, as his royal highness's offering, and, which is remarkable, the duke's velvet cap of state, with his coronet of strawberry leaves.

I used to say, to corroborate my hypothesis, that the skull of duke Humphrey at St. Alban's was very like the form of head in my picture, which argument diverted the late lord Holland extremely—but I trust now that nobody will dispute any longer my perfect acquaintance with *all dukes of Gloucester*.—By the way, did I ever tell you that when I published my *Historic Doubts on Richard III.*, my niece's marriage not being then acknowledged, George Selwyn said, he did not think *I* should have *doubted* about the duke of Gloucester ? On the inside of the other shutter is a man unknown : he is in a stable, as Joseph might be, but over him hangs a shield of arms, that are neither Joseph's nor Mary's. The colours are either black and white, or

so changed as not to be distinguishable. * * * * I conclude the person who is in red and white was the donor of the altar-piece, or benefactor; and what I want of you is to discover him and his arms; and to tell me whether duke Humphrey, Beaufort, Kempe, and Babington, were connected with St. Edmondsbury, or whether this unknown person was not a retainer of duke Humphrey, at least of the royal family.

At the same sale I bought a curious pair, that I conclude came from Blickling, with Hobart impaling Boleyn, from which latter family the former enjoyed that seat. How does this third winter of the season agree with yon? The wind to-day is sharper than a razor, and blows icicles into one's eyes. I was confined for seven weeks with the gout, yet am so well recovered as to have been abroad to-day, though it is as mild under the pole.

Pray can you tell me the title of the book that Mr. Ives dedicated to me? I never saw it, for he was so odd (I cannot call it modest, lest I should seem not so myself) as never to send it to me, and I never could get it.

Yours most truly.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Feb. 27, 1777.

You see, dear sir, that we thought on each other just at the same moment; but, as usual, you was thinking of obliging me, and I, of giving you trouble. You have fully satisfied me of the connexion between the Lancastrian princes and St. Edmondsbury. Edmondson, I conclude, will be able to find out the proprietor of the arms, impaling Walrond.

I am well acquainted with sir A. Weldon¹ and the Aulicus Coquinanæ,² and will return them with Mr. Ives's tracts, which

¹ Sir Anthony Weldon was the author of "The Court and Character of King James; written and taken by Sir A. W., being an eye and ear witness." London, 1650: a work which has been pronounced, by competent authority, "a despicable tissue of filth and obscenity, of falsehood and malignity." [Ed.]

² "Aulicus Coquinanæ; or an Answer to the Court and Character of King James." London, 1650. This work has been ascribed to William Sander-son, and to Dr. Heylin; and is, as well as Weldon's, reprinted in the "Secret History of the Court of King James." Edinburgh, 1811. [Ed.]

I intend to buy at the sale of his books. Tell me how I may convey them to you most safely. You say, "Till I shew an inclination to borrow more of your MSS." I hope you do not think my appetite for that loan is in the least diminished. I should at all minutes, and ever, be glad to peruse them all—but I was not sure you wished to lend them to me, though you deny me nothing—and my own fear of their coming to any mischance made me very modest about asking for them—but now, whenever you can send me any of them with perfect security, I eagerly and imprudently ask to see them: you cannot oblige me more, I assure you.

I am sorry Dr. E * * n is got into such a dirty scrape. There is scarce any decent medium observed at present between wasting fortunes and fabricating them—and both by any disreputable manner: for, as to saving money by prudent economy, the method is too slow in proportion to consumptions: even forgery, alas!¹ seems to be the counterpart or restorative of the ruin by gaming. I hope at least that robbery on the highway will go out of fashion as too piddling a profession for gentlemen.

I enclose a card for your friends, but must advertise them that March is in every respect a wrong month for seeing Strawberry. It not only wants its leaves and beauty then, but most of the small pictures and curiosities, which are taken down and packed up in winter, are not restored to their places, till the weather is fine and I am more there. Unless they are confined in time, your friends had much better wait till May—but, however, they will be very welcome to go when they please. I am more personally interested in hoping to see you there this summer—you must visit my new tower. Diminutive as it is, it adds much to the antique air of the whole in both fronts. You know I shall sympathize with your gout, and you are always master of your own hours.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 22, 1777.

It is not owing to forgetfulness, negligence, or idleness—to none of which I am subject, that you have not heard from me since I saw you, dear sir, but to my miserable occupation with

³ Alluding to Dr. Dodd. [Or.]

my poor nephew, who engrosses my whole attention, and will, I doubt, destroy my health, if he does not recover his. I have got him within fourteen miles of town with difficulty. He is rather worse than better, may recover in an instant, as he did last time, or remain in his present sullenness. I am far from expecting he should ever be perfectly in his senses, which, in my opinion, he scarce ever was. His intervals expose him to the worst people, his relapses overwhelm me.

I have put together some trifles I promised you, and will beg Mr. Lort to be the bearer when he goes to Cambridge, if I know of it. At present I have time for nothing I like. My age and inclination call for retirement: I envied your happy hermitage and leisure to follow your inclination. I have always *lived post*, and shall not die before I can bait—yet it is not my wish to be unemployed, could I but choose my occupations. I wish I could think of the pictures you mention, or had time to see Dr. Glynn and the master of Emmanuel. I doat on Cambridge, and could like to be often there—The beauty of King's College Chapel, now it is restored, penetrated me with a visionary longing to be a monk in it, though my life has been passed in turbulent scenes, in pleasures—or rather pastimes, and in much fashionable dissipation, still books, antiquity, and *virtù* kept hold of a corner of my heart, and since necessity has forced me of late years to be a man of business, my disposition tends to be a recluse for what remains—but it will not be my lot, and though there is some excuse for the young doing what they like, I doubt an old man should do nothing but what he ought, and I hope doing one's duty is the best preparation for death. Sitting with one's arms folded to think about it, is a very lazy way of preparing for it. If Charles V. had resolved to make some amends for his abominable ambition by doing good, his duty as a king, there would have been infinitely more merit than going to doze in a convent. One may avoid active guilt in a sequestered life, but the virtue of it is merely negative, though innocence is beautiful.


I approve much of your corrections on sir J. Hawkins, and send them to the magazine.

I want the exact blazon of William of Hatfield his arms,—I mean the prince buried at York: Mr. Mason and I are going to restore his monument, and I have not time to look for them: I know you will be so good as to assist.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

May 28, 1777.

I HAVE but time for a word. Mr. Lort has just been here, and does not return to Cambridge this month: he has advised me to send the box by the waggon; and it goes to-morrow by Burley's from the Bull. It is a large box, and yet contains very little, and less worth sending you; but the glass required bran, which makes the bulk. I found most of the pieces I bought at Mr. Ives's had suffered so much, by being brought to London, and carried to Twickenham, that they were too broken to offer you. You will find, indeed, but one good piece, that in this shape . The strange old ivory carving was given to me by the dowager duchess of Aiguillon. There are a few proofs of views of Strawberry; but some time or other you shall have a new and complete set. There is Strawberry's pedigree, too; but I can find no print of Ganginelli. I am ashamed so large a box should contain only such rubbish. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 19, 1777.

I THANK you for your notices, dear sir, and shall remember that on Prince William. I did see the Monthly Review, but hope one is not guilty of the death of every man who does not make one the dupe of a forgery.

I believe M^cPherson's success with Ossian, was more the ruin of Chatterton than I. Two years passed between my doubting the authenticity of Rowley's¹ poems and his death. I never

¹ The controversy on the authenticity of the poems attributed to Rowley must now be considered at an end; and it is surprising how the advocates for their genuineness could maintain their ground so long as they did against such a phalanx as Warton and Tyrwhitt, Stevens and Malone, Pinkerton and Chalmers, Scott and Southey, Herbert Croft and Dr. Jamieson; but as Price, the late editor of Warton, properly observed, "the knowledge of the spirit of our old poetry, which is now so generally diffused, has reduced the Rowleian Controversy to a dead letter." [Ed.]

knew he had been in London till some time after he had undone and poisoned himself there. The poems he sent me were transcripts in his own hand, and even in that circumstance he told a lie: he said he had them from the very person at Bristol to whom he had given them. If any man was to tell you that monkish rhymes had been dug up at Herculaneum, which was destroyed several centuries before there was any such poetry, should you believe it? Just the reverse is the case of Rowley's pretended poems. They have all the elegance of Waller and Prior, and more than lord Surry—but I have no objection to any body believing what he pleases. I think poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius—but I cannot think that Rowley foresaw metres that were invented long after he was dead, or that our language was more refined at Bristol in the reign of Henry V. than it was at court under Henry VIII. One of the chaplains of the bishop of Exeter has found a line of Rowley in *Hudibras*—the monk might foresee that too! The prematurity of Chatterton's genius is, however, full as wonderful, as that such a prodigy as Rowley should never have been heard of till the eighteenth century. The youth and industry of the former are miracles, too, yet still more credible. There is not a symptom in the poems, but the old words, that savours of Rowley's age—change the old words for modern, and the whole construction is of yesterday.

The other story you tell me, is very credible and perfectly in character.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, July 10, 1777.

DON'T be alarmed at this thousandth letter in a week. This is more to lady Hamilton¹ than to you. Pray tell her I have seen *monsieur la Bataille d'Azincourt*.² He brought me

¹ The first wife of sir William Hamilton, envoy extraordinary at the court of Naples. [Or.] Miss Barlow. [Ed.]

² M. le chevalier d'Azincourt, a French antiquary, long settled in Italy. [Or.] I. B. L. Seroux d'Agincourt, born at Beauvais in 1730, died at Rome in 1814, having, during thirty-six years, laboured most assiduously in the composition of his grand work, "*Histoire de l'Art par les Monumens, depuis*

her letter yesterday : and I kept him to sup, *sleep* in the modern phrase, and breakfast here this morning ; and flatter myself he was, and she will be, content with the regard I paid to her letter.

The weather is a thought warmer to-day, and I am as busy as bees are about their hay. My *hayssians*³ have cost me as much as if I had hired them of the landgrave.⁴

I am glad your invasion⁵ is blown over. I fear I must invite those flat-bottomed vessels hither, as the Swissess Necker has directed them to the port of Twickenham. Madame de Blot is too fine, and monsieur Schomberg one of the most disagreeable, cross, contemptuous savages I ever saw. I have often supped with him at the duchess de Choiseul's, and could not bear him ; and now I must be *charmé*, and *pénétré*, and *comblé*, to see him : and I shall act it very ill, as I always do when I don't do what I like. Madame Necker's letter is as affected and *précieuse*, as if Marmontel had written it for a Peruvian milk-maid. She says I am a philosopher, and as like madame de Sevigné as two peas—who was as unlike a philosopher as a gridiron. As I have none of madame de Sevigné's natural easy wit, I am rejoiced that I am no more like a philosopher neither, and still less like a *philosophe* ; which is a being compounded of D'Urfey and Diogenes, a pastoral coxcomb, and a supercilious brute.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 31, 1777.

You are very kind, dear sir, in giving me an account of your health and occupations, and inquiring after mine. I am sa *Décadence au Quatrième Siècle jusqu'à son Renouveau au Seizième.* Of this splendid book, in 6 vols. folio, which was not published until 1823, nine years after the death of the author, there is an interesting review in the seventh volume of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*. [Ed.]

³ Hessians. [Or.]

⁴ An allusion to the seventeen thousand which had been hired for the American service, by treaties entered into in the preceding year with the landgravine of Hesse Cassel, the duke of Brunswick, and the hereditary prince of Hesse Cassel. [Ed.]

⁵ A party of French nobility then in England, who were to have made a visit at Park-place. [Or.]

very sorry you are not as free from gout, as I have been ever since February ; but I trust it will only keep you from other complaints, and never prevent your amusing yourself, which you are one of those few happy beings that can always do ; and your temper is so good, and your mind so naturally philosophic, composed, and contented, that you neither want the world, care about it, nor are affected by any thing that occurs in it. This is true wisdom, but wisdom which nothing can give but constitution. Detached amusements have always made a great part of my own delight, and have sown my life with some of its best moments. My intention was, that they should be the employments of my latter years, but fate seems to have chalked out a very different scene for me ! The misfortune of my nephew has involved me in business, and consequently care, and opens a scene of disputes, with which I shall not molest your tranquillity.

The dangerous situation in which his royal highness the duke of Gloucester has been, and out of which I doubt he is scarce yet emerged, though better, has added more thorns to my uneasy mind. The duchess's daughters are at Hampton-court, and partly under my care. In one word, my whole summer has been engrossed by duties, which has confined me at home, without indulging myself in a single pursuit to my taste.

In short, as I have told you before, I often wish myself a monk at Cambridge. Writers on government condemn, very properly, a recluse life, as contrary to nature's interest, who loves procreation. But as nature seems not very desirous that we should procreate to threescore years and ten, I think convents very suitable retreats for those whom our *Alma Mater* does not emphatically call to her *Opus Magnum*. And though, to be sure, grey hairs are fittest to conduct state affairs, yet as the Rehoboams of the world (Louis XVI. excepted) do not always trust the rudder of government to ancient hands, old gentlemen, methinks, are very ill placed [when not at the council board] any where but in a cloister. As I have no more vocation to the ministry than to carrying on my family, I sigh after a dormitory ; and as in six weeks my clock will strike sixty, I wish I had nothing more to do with the world. I am not tired of living, but—what signifies sketching visions ? One must take one's lot as it comes ; bitter and sweet are poured into every cup. To-morrow may be

pleasanter than to-day. Nothing lasts of one colour. One must embrace the cloister, or take the chances of the world as they present themselves; and since uninterrupted happiness would but embitter the certainty that even that must end, rubs and crosses should be softened by the same consideration. I am not so busied, but I shall be very glad of a sight of your MS., and will return it carefully. I will thank you, too, for the print of Mr. Jenyns which I have not, nor have seen. Adieu!

Yours most cordially.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 16, 1777.

I HAVE received your volume safely, dear sir, and hurry to thank you before I have read a page, that you may be in no pain about its arrival. I will return it with the greatest care as soon as I have finished it; and at the same time will send Mr. Essex the bills, as I beg you will let him know. I have no less reason for writing immediately, to thank you for the great confidence you place in me. You talk of *nonsense*; alas! what are all our opinions else? if we search for truth before we fix our principles, what do we find but doubt? And which of us begins the search a *tabula rasa*? Nay, where can we hunt but in volumes of error or purposed delusion? Have not we, too, a bias in our own minds—our passions? They will turn the scale in favour of the doctrines most agreeable to them. Yet let us be a little vain: you and I differ radically in our principles, and yet in forty years they have never cast a gloom over our friendship. We could give the world a reason that it would not like. We have both been sincere, have both been consistent, and neither adopted our principles nor have varied them for our interest.

Your labour, as far as I am acquainted with it, astonishes me: it shows what can be achieved by a man that does not lose a moment; and, which is still better, how happy the man is who can always employ himself. I do not believe that the proud prelate, who would not make you a little happier, is half so much to be envied. Thank you for the print of Soame Jenyns: it is a

proof of sir Joshua's art, who could give a strong resemblance of so uncouth a countenance, without leaving it disagreeable.

The duke of Gloucester is miraculously revived. For two whole days I doubted whether he was not dead. I hope fatalists and omenmongers will be confuted; and thus, as his grandfather broke the charm of the second of the name being an unfortunate prince, the duke will baffle that, which has made the title of Gloucester unpropitious. Adieu!

Yours most gratefully.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Tuesday evening, Sept. 16, 1777.

I HAVE got a delightful plaything, if I had time for play. It is a new sort of camera-obscura¹ for drawing the portraits of persons, or prospects, or insides of rooms, and does not depend on the sun or any thing. The misfortune is, that there is a vast deal of machinery and putting together, and I am the worst person living for managing it. You know I am impenetrably dull in every thing that requires a grain of common sense. The inventor is to come to me on Friday, and try if he can make me remember my right hand from my left. I could as soon have invented my machine as manage it; yet it has cost me ten guineas, and may cost me as much more as I please for improving it. You will conclude it was the dearness tempted me. I believe I must keep an astronomer, like Mr. Beauclerc, to help me to play with my rattle. The inventor, who seems very modest and simple, but I conclude an able flatterer, was in love with my house, and vowed nothing ever suited his camera so well. To be sure, the painted windows and the prospects, and the Gothic chimneys, &c. &c. were the delights of one's eyes, when no bigger than a silver penny. *You* would know how to manage it, as if you had never done any thing else. Had not you better come and see it? You will learn how to conduct it, with the pleasure of correcting my awkwardness and *unlearnibility*. Sir Joshua Reynolds and West have each got one; and the duke of Northumberland is so charmed with the invention, that I dare say he can

¹ The machine called a delineator. [Or.]

talk upon and explain it till I should understand ten times less of the matter than I do. Remember, neither lady Ailesbury nor you, nor Mrs. Damer, have seen my new divine closet, nor the billiard-sticks with which the countess of Pembroke and Arcadia used to play with her brother sir Philip; nor the portrait of *la belle* Jennings in the state bedchamber. I go to town this day se'nnight for a day or two; and as, *to be sure*, Mount Edgcumbe has put you out of humour with Park-place, you may deign to leave it for a moment. I never did see Cotchel,² and am sorry. Is not the old wardrobe there still? There was one from the time of Cain; but Adam's breeches and Eve's under-petticoat were eaten by a goat in the ark. Good night.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 22, 1777.

I RETURN you your MS. dear sir, with a thousand thanks, and shall be impatient to hear that you receive it safe. It has amused me much, and I admire Mr. Baker¹ for having been able to show so much sense on so dry a subject. I wish, as you say you have materials for it, that you would write his life. He deserved it much more than most of those he has recorded. His book on the Deficiencies of Learning is most excellent—and far too little known. I admire his moderation, too, which was extraordinary in a man who had suffered so much for his principles. Yet they warped even him, for he rejects bishop Burnet's character of bishop Gunning in p. 200, and yet in the very next page, gives the same character of him. Burnet's words are, "he had a great confusion of things in his head, but could bring nothing into method:" pray compare this with p. 201. I see nothing in which

² The old residence of the family of Edgcumbe, twelve miles distant from Mount Edgcumbe. [Or.]

¹ Thomas Baker, the learned author of "Reflections on Learning, wherein is shewn the insufficiency thereof in its several particulars, in order to evince the usefulness and necessity of Revelation;" a work that has gone through numerous editions, and was at one time one of the most popular books in the language,—was born at Durham in 1656, and died in the office of commoner master of St. John's College, Cambridge, 2d July 1740. [Ed.]

they differ, except that Burnet does not talk so much of his comeliness as Mr. Baker.

I shall not commend *your* moderation, when you excuse such a man as bishop Watson. Nor ought you to be angry with Burnet, but with the witnesses on whose evidence Watson was convicted. To tell you the truth, I am glad when such faults are found with Burnet, for it shows his enemies are not angry at his telling falsehoods, but the truth. Must not an historian say a bishop was convicted of simony, if he was? I will tell you what was said of Burnet's History, by one whose testimony you yourself will not dispute—at least you would not in any thing else. That confessor said, "Damn him, he has told a great deal of truth, but where the devil did he learn it?" This was St. Atterbury's testimony.

I shall take the liberty of reproving you, too, dear sir, for defending that abominable murderess queen Christina—and how can you doubt her conversation with Burnet? you must know there are a thousand evidences of her laughing at the religion she embraced. If you approve her, I will allow you to condemn lord Russel and Algernon Sidney. Well, as we shall never have the same heroes, we will not dispute about them, nor shall I find fault when you have given me so much entertainment: it would be very ungrateful, and I have a thousand obligations to you, and want to have more. I want to see more of your MSS.: they are full of curiosities, and I love some of your heroes, too: I honour bishop Fisher, and love Mr. Baker.

I have found very few errata indeed, and have corrected a few with pencil; all are very trifling. In p. 2, last line but one, *originial* is written for *original*, and in p. 6, line 7, of the copy of verses *lyest* for *lyes*; in p. 10, line 17, *authentic* probably for *unauthentic*.

In p. 200, you are a little mistaken. The late king of France was not silent from rule, but shyness: he could scarce ever be persuaded to speak to entire strangers.

If I might choose, I should like to see your account of the persons educated at King's—but as you may have objections, I insist if you have, that you make me no word of answer. It is, perhaps, impertinent to ask it, and silence will lay neither of us under any difficulty. I have no right to make such a request, nor do now, but on the foot of its proving totally indifferent to you.

You will make me blame myself, if it should a moment distress you, and I am sure you are too good-natured to put me out of humour with myself, which your making no answer would not do.

I enclose my bills for Mr. Essex, and will trouble you to send them to him. I again thank you, and trust you will be as friendly free with me, as I have been with you : you know I am a brother monk in every thing but religious and political opinions. I only laugh at the thirty-nine articles : but abhor Calvin as much as I do the queen of Sweden, for he was as thorough an assassin.

Yours ever.

P.S. As I have a great mind, and, indeed, ought, when I require it, to show moderation, and when I have not, ought to confess it, which I do, for I own I am not moderate on certain points ; if you are busy yourself and will send me the materials, I will draw up the life of Mr. Baker ; or, if you are not content with it, you shall burn it in Smithfield.

In good truth, I revere conscientious martyrs, of all sects, communions, and parties—I heartily pity them, if they are weak men. When they are as sensible as Mr. Baker, I doubt my own understanding more than his. I know I have not his virtues, but should delight in doing justice to them ; and, perhaps, from a man of a different party the testimony would be more to his honour. I do not call myself of different principles ; because a man that thinks himself bound by his oath, can be a man of no principle if he violates it.

I do not mean to deny but many men might think king James's breach of his oath, a dispensation from theirs ; but, if they did not think so, or did not think their duty to their country obliged them to renounce their king, I should never defend those who took the new oaths from interest.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 2, 1777.

I AM a little uneasy, dear sir, at not hearing that you have received your precious volume. I sent it as you ordered to the Queen's Head, in Gray's-inn-lane, yesterday was sevensnight, and

my own servant carried it, and they assured him you would receive it the next day. With it I troubled you with a little parcel for Mr. Essex. As he promised me to come hither the beginning of this month, I am in hopes he is coming, and will bring me word of your having received your book. I should be out of my wits if you had not.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

October 5, 1777.

You are exceedingly good, and I shall assuredly accept your proposal in the fullest sense, and to ensure Mrs. Damer, beg I may expect you on Saturday next the 11th. If lord and lady William Campbell will do me the honour of accompanying you, I shall be most happy to see them, and expect miss Caroline.¹ Let me know about them, that the state bedchamber may be aired.

My difficulties about removing from home arise from the consciousness of my own weakness. I make it a rule, as much as I can, to conform wherever I go. Though I am threescore to-day, I should not think that an age for giving every thing up; but it is, for whatever one has not strength to perform. You, though not a vast deal younger, are as healthy and strong, thank God, as ever you was: and you cannot have ideas of the mortification of being stared at by strangers and servants, when one hobbles, or cannot do as others do. I delight in being with you, and the Richmonds, and those I love and know; but the crowds of young people, and Chichester folks, and officers, and strange servants, make me afraid of Goodwood, I own. My spirits are never low, but they seldom will last out the whole day; and though I dare to say I appear to many capricious, and different from the rest of the world, there is more reason in my behaviour than there seems. You know in London I seldom stir out in a morning, and always late; and it is because I want a great deal of rest. Exercise never did agree with me: and it is hard if I do not know myself by this time; and what has done so well with me will probably

¹ Miss Caroline Campbell, eldest daughter of lord William Campbell.
[Or.]

suit me best for the rest of my life. It would be ridiculous to talk so much of myself, and to enter into such trifling details, but *you* are the person in the world that I wish to convince that I do not act merely from humour or ill-humour; though I confess at the same time that I want your *bonhommie*, and have a disposition not to care at all for people that I do not absolutely like. I could say a great deal more on this head, but it is not proper; though, when one has pretty much done with the world, I think with lady Blandford, that one may indulge one's self in one's own whims and partialities in one's own house. I do not mean, still less to profess, retirement, because it is less ridiculous to go on with the world to the last, than to return to it; but in a quiet way it has long been my purpose to drop a great deal of it. Of all things I am farthest from not intending to come often to Park-place, whenever you have little company; and I had rather be with you in November than in July, because I am so totally unable to walk farther than a snail. I will never say any more on these subjects, because there may be as much affectation in being over old, as folly in being over young. My idea of age is, that one has nothing really to do but what one ought, and what is reasonable. All affectations are pretensions; and pretending to be any thing one is not, cannot deceive when one is known, as every body must be that has lived long. I do not mean that old folks may not have pleasures if they can; but then I think those pleasures are confined to being comfortable, and to enjoying the few friends one has not outlived. I am so fair as to own, that one's duties are not pleasures. I have given up a great deal of my time to nephews and nieces, even to some I can have little affection for. I do love my nieces, nay like them; but people above forty years younger are certainly not the society I should seek. They can only think and talk of what is, or is to come; I certainly am more disposed to think and talk of what is past: and the obligation of passing the end of a long life in sets of totally new company is more irksome to me than passing a great deal of my time, as I do, quite alone. Family love and pride make me interest myself about the young people of my own family—for the whole rest of the young world, they are as indifferent to me as puppets or black children. This is my creed, and a key to my whole conduct, and the more likely to remain my creed, as I think it is *raisonné*. If I could paint my opinions

instead of writing them—and I don't know whether it would not make a new sort of alphabet—I should use different colours for different affections at different ages. When I speak of love, affection, friendship, taste, liking, I should draw them rose colour, carmine, blue, green, yellow, for my contemporaries: for new comers, the first would be of no colour; the others, purple, brown, crimson, and changeable. Remember, one tells one's creed only to one's confessor, that is *sub sigillo*. I write to you as I think; to others as I must. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 19, 1777.

I THANK you much, dear sir, for the sight of the book, which I return by Mr. Essex. It is not new to me that Burnet paid his court on the other side in the former part of his life; nor will I insist that he changed on conviction, which might be said, and generally is, for all converts, even those who shift their principles the most glaringly from interest. Duke Lauderdale,¹ indeed, was such a dog, that the honestest man must have been driven to detest him, however connected with him. I doubt Burnet could not be blind to his character, when he wrote the dedication. In truth, I have given up many of my saints, but not on the accusations of such wretches as Dalrymple² and Macpherson:³ nor can men, so much their opposites, shake my

¹ John, second earl of Lauderdale, who having distinguished himself by his zealous and active exertions in the royal cause during the civil wars, was, after the restoration, created, 2d May 1672, marquis of March and duke of Lauderdale, in Scotland. [Ed.]

² Sir John Dalrymple, author of "Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland." Edinburgh, 1771-1773-1788; 4to. 3 vols.

Dr. Johnson, speaking of this work, and the discoveries made by Sir John to the prejudice of lord Russell and Algernon Sidney, said, "This Dalrymple seems to be an honest fellow; for he tells equally what makes against both sides. But nothing can be poorer than his mode of writing; it is the mere bouncing of a school-boy: Great He! but Greater She! and such stuff."

This work called forth two or three others in reply. [Ed.]

³ James M'Pherson, the editor of Ossian, who had published a "History of Great Britain, from the Restoration in 1660 to the Accession of the House of Hanover, 1775," 2 vols. 4to.; and also "An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland." London, 4to. 1771. [Ed.]

faith in lord Russel and Algernon Sidney. I do not relinquish those that sealed their integrity with their blood, but such as have taken thirty pieces of silver.

I was sorry you said we had any variance. We have differed in sentiments but not in friendship. Two men, however unlike in principles, may be perfect friends, when both are sincere in their opinions as we are. Much less shall we quarrel about those of our separate parties, since very few on either side have been so invariably consistent as you and I have been; and therefore we are more sure of each other's integrity, than that of men whom we know less and who did vary from themselves. As you and I are only speculative persons, and no actors, it would be very idle to squabble about those that do not exist. In short, we are, I trust, in as perfect good humour with each other as we have been these forty years.

Pray do not hurry yourself about the anecdotes of Mr. Baker, nor neglect other occupations on that account. I shall certainly not have time to do any thing this year. I expect the duke and duchess of Gloucester in a very few days, must go to town as soon as they arrive, and shall probably have not much idle leisure before next summer.

It is not very discreet to look even so far forward, nor am I apt any longer to lay distant plans. A little sedentary literary amusement is indeed no very lofty castle in the air, if I do lay the foundation in idea seven or eight months beforehand.

Whatever MSS. you lend me, I shall be very grateful for. They entertain me exceedingly, and I promise you we will not have the shadow of an argument about them. I do not love disputation even with those most indifferent to me. *Your* pardon I most sincerely beg for having contested a single point with you. I am sure it was not with a grain of ill-humour towards you: on the contrary, it was from wishing at that moment that you did not approve though I disliked—but even that I give up as unreasonable.

You are in the right, dear sir, not to apply to Masters for any papers he may have relating to Mr. Baker.⁴ It is a trumpery

⁴ The papers which Masters possessed he himself eventually published, in 1774, under the title of "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Baker, from the Papers of Dr. Zachary Grey. With a Catalogue of his Manuscript Collections. By R. Masters." [Ed.]

fellow, from whom one would rather receive a refusal than an obligation.

I am sorry to hear Mr. Lort has the gout, and still more concerned that you still suffer from it. Such patience and temper as yours are the only palliatives. As the bootikins have so much abridged and softened my fits, I do not expect their return with the alarm and horror I used to do, and that is being cured of one half the complaints. I had scarce any pain last time, and did not keep my bed a day, and had no gout at all in either foot. May not I ask you if this is not some merit in the bootikins? To have cured me of my apprehensions, is to me a vast deal, for now the intervals do not connect the fits. You will understand, that I mean to speak a word to you in favour of the bootikins, for can one feel benefit, and not wish to impart it to a suffering friend?

Indeed I am

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, March 31, 1778.

I DID think it long indeed, dear sir, since I heard from you, and am very sorry the gout was the cause. I hope after such long persecution you will have less now than you apprehend.

I should not have been silent myself, had I had any thing to tell you that you would have cared to hear.

Politics have been the only language, and abuse the only expression of the winter, neither of which are, or deserve to be, inmates of your peaceable hermitage. I wish, however, they may not have grown so serious as to threaten every retreat with intrusion! I will let you know when I am settled at Strawberry-hill, and can look over your kind collections relating to Mr. Baker. He certainly deserves his place in the *Biographia*, but I am not surprised that *you* would not submit to *his* being instituted and inducted by a presbyterian. In truth, I, who have not the same zeal against dissenters, do not at all desire to peruse the *History of their Apostles*, which are generally very uninteresting.

You must excuse the shortness of this, in which, too, I have been interrupted; my nephew is as suddenly recovered as he did

last time; and, though I am far from thinking him perfectly in his senses, a great deal of his disorder is removed, which, though it will save me a great deal of trouble, hurries me at present, and forces me to conclude.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, April 23, 1777.

I THANK you, dear sir, for the notice of William Le Worcestre's¹ appearance, and will send for my book as soon as I go to town, which will not be till next week.

I have been here since Friday as much a hermit as yourself. I wanted air and quiet, having been much fatigued on my nephew's amendment, trying to dissuade him from making the campaign with his militia; but in vain! I now dread hearing of some eccentric freak. I am sorry Mr. Tyson has quite dropped me, though he sometimes comes to town. I am still more concerned at your frequent disorders—I hope their chief seat is unwillingness to move.

Your Bakeriana will be very welcome about June: I shall not be completely resident here till then, at least not have leisure, as May is the month I have most visits from town. As few spare hours as I have, I have contrived to go through Mr. Pennant's Welsh Tour, and Warton's second volume;² both which come within the circle of your pursuits. I have far advanced too in lord Hardwicke's first volume of State Papers.³ I have yet found nothing that appears a new scene, or sets the old in a new light; yet they are rather amusing, though not in proportion to the bulk of the volumes. One likes to hear actors speak for them-

¹ "Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre." Cantab. 1778, 8vo., edited by Dr. James Nasmith, who published the excellent Catalogue of MSS. which Archbishop Parker left to Corpus Christi College, at Cambridge. [Ed.]

² Thomas Warton's History of English Poetry. A new edition of this celebrated and interesting work, with many additional and illustrative notes, is now preparing for publication. [Ed.]

³ A valuable Collection of State Papers, from 1501 to 1726, published in two volumes 4to., by the earl of Hardwicke, the editor of the Life of Sir Dudley Carleton. [Ed.]

selves—but, on the other hand, they use a great many more words than are necessary : and when one knows the events from history, it is a little tiresome to go back to the details and the delays.

I should be glad to employ Mr. Essex on my offices, but the impending war with France deters me. It is not a season for expense ! I could like to leave my little castle complete ; but though I am only a spectator, I cannot be indifferent to the aspect of the times, as the country gentleman was, who was going out with his hounds as the two armies at Edge-hill were going to engage. I wish for peace and tranquillity, and should be glad to pass my remaining hours in the idle and retired amusements I love, and without any solicitude for my country. Adieu !

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 21, 1778.

I will not flatter you : I was not in the least amused with either Simon, Simeon, or William of Wyrcestre. If there was any thing tolerable in either, it was the part omitted, or the part I did not read, which was the Journey to Jerusalem, about which I have not the smallest curiosity. I thank you for mentioning the Gentleman's Magazine, which I sent for.

Mr. Essex has called upon me, and left me the drawing of a bridge, with which I am perfectly pleased—but I was unluckily out of town ; he left no direction, and I know not where to seek him in this overgrown bottle of hay. I still hope he will call again before his return.

May not I, should not I, wish you joy on the restoration of popery ?¹ I expect soon to see capuchins tramping about, and Jesuits *in high places*. We are relapsing fast to our pristine state, and have nothing but our island, and our old religion.

Mr. Nasmith's publication directed me to the MSS. in Bene't Library, which I did not know was printed. I found two or

¹ The bill for the relief of the Roman Catholics, which released their priests from prosecution, and allowed members of that religion to purchase lands and take them by descent, passed on the 8th May 1778. [Ed.]

three from which I should be glad to have transcripts, and would willingly pay for; but I left the book at Strawberry, and must trouble you another time with that commission.

The city wants to bury lord Chatham² in St. Paul's, which, as a person said to me this morning, would literally be *robbing Peter to pay Paul*. I wish it could be so, that there might be some decoration in that nudity, *en attendant* the re-establishment of various altars. It is not my design to purchase the new edition of the Biographia; I trust they will give the old purchasers the additions as a supplement. I had corrected the errata of the press throughout my copy, but I could not take the trouble of transcribing them, nor could lend them the originals, as I am apt to scribble notes in the margins of all my books that interest me at all. Pray let me know if Baker's Life is among the additions, and whether you are satisfied with it, as there could not be events enough in his retired life to justify two accounts of it.

There are no new *old news*, and you care for nothing within the memory of man. I am always intending to draw up an account of my intercourse with Chatterton, which I take very kindly you remind me of, but some avocation or other has still prevented it. My perfect innocence of having indirectly been an ingredient in his dismal fate, which happened two years after our correspondence, and after he had exhausted both his resources and his constitution, have made it more easy to prove that I never saw him, knew nothing of his ever being in London, and was the first person, instead of the last, on whom he had practised his impositions, and founded his chimeric hopes of promotion. My very first, or at least second letter, undeceived him in those views, and our correspondence was broken off before he quitted his master's business at Bristol —

² William Pitt, the great earl of Chatham, died on the 10th May 1776. He had attended the House of Lords on the 7th April preceding, though in a very debilitated state, and rose after the duke of Richmond, who had been contending for the policy of recognizing the independence of the American colonies, and expressed in strong terms his indignation at what he termed a dismemberment of the empire. He was replied to with great deference by the duke; when eagerly attempting to rise again, he fell back in a fit and was carried out of the house. His remains were honoured with a public funeral, his debts were paid by the nation, and an annuity of £4,000 settled upon the earldom of Chatham. [Ed.]

so that his disappointment with me was but his first ill success; and he resented my incredulity so much, that he never condescended to let me see him. Indeed, what I have said now to you, and which cannot be controverted by a shadow of a doubt, would be sufficient vindication. I could only add to the proofs, a vain regret of never having known his distresses, which his amazing genius would have tempted me to relieve, though I fear he had no other claim to compassion. Mr. Warton has said enough to open the eyes of every one who is not greatly prejudiced to his forgeries. Dr. Milles is one who will not make a bow to Dr. Percy for not being as wilfully blind as himself—but when he gets a beam in his eye that he takes for an antique truth, there is no persuading him to submit to be couched. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 3, 1778.

I WILL not dispute with you, dear sir, on patriots and politics. One point is past controversy, that the ministers have ruined this country; and if the church of England's satisfied with being reconciled with the church of Rome, and thinks it a compensation for the loss of America, and all credit in Europe, she is as silly an old woman as any granny in an almshouse. France is very glad we are grown such fools, and soon saw that the presbyterian Dr. Franklin¹ had more sense than our ministers together. She has got over all her prejudices, has expelled the Jesuits, and made the protestant Swiss, Necker, her comptroller-general. It is a little woful, that we are relapsing into the nonsense the rest of Europe is shaking off! and it is more deplorable, as we know by repeated experience, that this country has always been disgraced by Tory administrations. The rubric is the only gainer by them in a few martyrs.

I do not know yet what is settled about the spot of lord Chatham's interment. I am no more an enthusiast to his

¹ Dr. Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane were publicly received at the Court of France as ambassadors from America in March 1778. [Ed.]

memory than you. I knew his faults and his defects—yet one fact cannot only not be controverted, but I doubt more remarkable every day—I mean, that under him we attained not only our highest elevation, but the most solid authority in Europe. When the names of Marlborough and Chatham are still pronounced with awe in France, our little cavils make a puny sound. Nations that are beaten cannot be mistaken. I have been looking out for your friend a set of my heads of painters, and I find I want six or seven. I think I have some odd ones in town; if I have not, I will have deficiencies supplied from the plates, though I fear they will not be good, as so many have been taken off. I should be very ungrateful for all your kindnesses, if I neglected any opportunity of obliging you, dear sir. Indeed our old and unalterable friendship is creditable to us both, and very uncommon between two persons who differ so much in their opinions relative to church and state—I believe the reason is, that we are both sincere, and never meant to take advantage of our principles, which I allow is too common on both sides, and I own, too, fairly more common on my side of the question than on yours. There is a reason, too, for that; the honours and emoluments are in the gift of the crown: the nation has no separate treasury to reward its friends.

If Mr. Tyrwhit² has opened his eyes to Chatterton's forgeries, there is an instance of conviction against strong prejudice! I have drawn up an account of my transaction with that marvellous young man; you shall see it one day or other, but I do not intend to print it. I have taken a thorough dislike to being an author; and if it would not look like begging you to compliment me, by contradicting me, I would tell you, what I am most seriously convinced of, that I find what small share of parts I had, grown dulled—and when I perceive it myself, I may well believe that others would not be less shortsighted. It is very natural; mine were spirits rather than parts; and as time has abated the one, it must surely destroy their resemblance to the other: pray don't say a syllable in

² Tyrwhit, the learned editor of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in its time the best edited book in the English language, had, on the appearance of the *Rowley Poems*, believed them genuine; but being afterwards convinced of the contrary, did not hesitate to avow his conviction. [Ed.]

reply on this head, or I shall have done exactly what I said I would not do. Besides, as you have always been too partial to me, I am on my guard, and when I will not expose myself to my enemies, I must not listen to the prejudices of my friends; and as nobody is more partial to me than you, there is nobody I must trust less in that respect.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 10, 1778.

I AM as impatient and in as much hurry as you was, dear sir, to clear myself from the slightest intention of censuring your politics. I know the sincerity and disinterested goodness of your heart, and when I must be convinced how little certain we are all of what is truth, it would be very presumptuous to condemn the opinions of any good man, and still less an old and unalterable friend, as I have ever found you. The destruction that violent arbitrary principles have drawn on this blinded country has moved my indignation. We never were a great and happy country till the Revolution. The system of these days tended to overturn, and has overturned, that establishment, and brought on the disgraces that ever attended the foolish and wicked councils of the house of Stuart. If man is a rational being, he has a right to make use of his reason, and to enjoy his liberty. We, we alone almost had a constitution that every other nation upon earth envied or ought to envy. This is all I contend for. I will give you up whatever descriptions of men you please; that is, the leaders of parties, not the principles. These cannot change, those generally do, when power falls into the hands of them or their party, because men are corruptible, which truth is not. But the more the leaders of a party dedicated to liberty are apt to change, the more I adore the principle, because it shews that extent of power is not to be trusted even with those that are the most sensible of the value of liberty. Man is a domineering animal; and it has not only been my principle, but my practice, too, to quit every body at the gate of the palace. I trust we shall not much differ on

these outlines, but we will bid adieu to the subject : it is never an agreeable one to those who do not mean to make a trade of it.

I heartily wish you may not find the pontiff what I think the order and what I know him, if you mean the high priest of Ely. He is all I have been describing and worse : and I have too good an opinion of you, to believe that he will ever serve you.

What I said of disclaiming authorship by no means alluded to Mr. Baker's life. It would be enough that you desire it, for me to undertake it. Indeed, I am inclined to it, because he was what you and I are, a party-man from principle, not from interest : and he who was so candid, surely is entitled to the strictest candour. You shall send me your papers whenever you please. If I can succeed to your satisfaction, I shall be content : though I assure you there was no affectation in my saying that I find my small talent decline. I shall write the life to oblige you, without any thoughts of publication, unless I am better pleased than I expect to be, and even then not in my own life. I had rather shew that I am sensible of my own defects, and that I have judgment enough not to hope praise for my writings ; for surely when they are not obnoxious, and one only leaves them behind one, it is a mark that one is not very vain of them.

I have found the whole set of my Painters, and will send them the first time I go to town : and I will have my papers on Chatterton transcribed for you, though I am much chagrined at your giving me no hope of seeing you again here. I will not say more of it ; for, while it is in my power, I will certainly make you a visit now and then, if there is no other way of our meeting. Mr. Tyrrwhit, I hear, has actually published an Appendix, in which he gives up Mr. Rowley. I have not seen it, but will. Shall I beg you to transcribe the passage in which Dr. Kippis abuses my father and me,¹ for I shall not buy the new edition, only to purchase abuse on me and mine : I may be angry with liberties he takes with sir Robert, but not with myself ; I shall rather take it as a flattery to be ranked with him ; though there can be nothing worse said of my father than

¹ See note, page 144. [Ed.]

to place us together. Oh! that great, that good man! Dr. Kippis may as well throw a stone at the sun.

I am sorry you have lost poor Mr. Bentham. Will you say a civil thing for me to his widow, if she is living, and you think it not improper? I have not forgotten their great kindness to me. Pray send me your papers on Mr. Prior's generosity to Mr. Baker. I am sorry it was not so. Prior is much a favourite with me, *though a Tory*, nor did I ever hear any thing ill of him. He left his party, but not his friends, and seems to me to have been very amiable. Do you know I pretend to be very impartial sometimes. Mr. Hollis² wrote against me for not being Whig enough. I am offended with Mrs. Macaulay³ for being too much a Whig. In short, we are all silly animals, and scarce ever more so than when we affect sense.

Yours ever.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

Strawberry-hill, June 25, 1778.

I AM quite astonished, madam, at not hearing of Mr. Conway's being returned! What is he doing? Is he revolting and setting up for himself, like our nabobs in India? or is he forming Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark, into the united provinces in the compass of a silver penny? I should not wonder if this was to be the fate of our distracted empire, which we seem to have made so large, only that it might afford to split into separate kingdoms. I told Mr. C. I should not write any more, concluding he would not stay a twinkling; and your ladyship's last encouraged my expecting him. In truth, I had nothing to tell him if he had written.

I have been in town but one single night this age, as I could not bear to throw away this phoenix June. It has rained a good deal this morning, but only made it more delightful. The

² Thomas Hollis, Esq., the well-known editor of "Toland's Life of Milton," and of "Algernon Sidney's Discourses on Government," London, 1763; of "Algernon Sidney's Works," 1772; and of several other republican works. He died in 1774. [Ed.]

³ The celebrated Mrs. Macaulay, well known by her "History of England." [Ed.]

flowers are all Arabian. I have found but one inconvenience, which is the hosts of cuckoos: one would not think one was in Doctors' Commons. It is very disagreeable, that the nightingales should sing but half a dozen songs, and the other beasts squall for two months together.

Poor Mrs. Clive has been robbed again in her own lane, as she was last year, and has got the jaundice, she thinks, with the fright. I don't make a visit without a blunderbuss; so one might as well be invaded by the French. Though I live in the centre of ministers, I do not know a syllable of politics; and though within hearing of lady * * *, who is but two miles off, I have not a word of news to send your ladyship. I live like Berecynthia, surrounded by nephews and nieces; yet Park-place is full as much in my mind, and I beg for its history.

Your most faithful.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

July 8, 1778.

I HAVE had some conversation with a ministerial person, on the subject of pacification with France; and he dropped a hint, that as we should not have much chance of a good peace, the opposition would make great clamour on it. I said a few words on the duty of ministers to do what they thought right, be the consequence what it would. But as honest men do not want such lectures, and dishonest will not let them weigh, I waved that theme, to dwell on what is more likely to be persuasive, and which I am firmly persuaded is no less true than the former maxim; and that was, that the ministers are *still* so strong, that if they could get a peace that would save the nation, though not a brilliant or glorious one, the nation in general would be pleased with it, and the clamours of the opposition be insignificant.

I added, what I think true, too, that no time is to be lost in treating; not only for preventing a blow, but from the consequences the first misfortune would have. The nation is not yet alienated from the court, but it is growing so; is grown so enough, for any calamity to have violent effects. Any internal disturbance would advance the hostile designs of France. An

insurrection from distress would be a double invitation to invasion; and, I am sure, much more to be dreaded, even personally, by the ministers, than the ill-humours of opposition for even an inglorious peace. To do the opposition justice, it is not composed of incendiaries. Parliamentary speeches raise no tumults: but tumults would be a dreadful thorough bass to speeches. The ministers do not know the strength they have left (supposing they apply it in time), if they are afraid of making any peace. They were too sanguine in making war; I hope they will not be too timid of making peace.

What do you think of an idea of mine, of offering France a neutrality? that is, to allow her to assist both us and the Americans. I know she would assist only them: but were it not better to connive at her assisting them, without attacking us, than her doing both? A treaty with her would perhaps be followed by one with America. We are sacrificing all the essentials we *can* recover, for a few words; and risking the independence of this country, for the nominal supremacy over America. France seems to leave us time for treating. She made no scruple of begging peace of us in 63, that she might lie by and recover her advantages. Was not that a wise precedent? Does not she *now* show that it was? Is not policy the honour of nations? I mean, not morally, but has Europe left itself any other honour? And since it has really left itself no honour, and as little morality, does not the morality of a nation consist in its preserving itself in as much happiness as it can? The invasion of Portugal by Spain in the last war, the partition of Poland, have abrogated the law of nations. Kings have left no ties between one another. Their duty to their people is still allowed. He is a good king that preserves his people; and if temporising answers that end, is it not justifiable? You, who are as moral as wise, answer my questions. Grotius is obsolete. Dr. Joseph¹ and Dr. Frederic,² with four hundred thousand commentators, are reading new lectures—and I should say, thank God, to one another, if the four hundred thousand commentators were not in worse danger than they.³ Louis XVI.

¹ The emperor of Germany. [Or.]

² Frederic II. king of Prussia. [Or.]

³ The emperor of Germany and king of Prussia having some dispute about Bavaria, brought immense armies into the field, but found their forces

is grown a casuist compared to those partitioners. Well, let us simple individuals keep our honesty, and bless our stars that we have not armies at our command, lest we should divide kingdoms that are at our *bienséance* ! What a dreadful thing it is for such a wicked little imp as man to have absolute power !—— But I have travelled into Germany, when I meant to talk to you only of England; and it is too late to recall my text. Good-night.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

July 12, 1778.

MR. LORT has delivered your papers to me, dear sir, and I have already gone through them. I will try if I can make any thing of them, but fear I have not art enough, as I perceive there is absolutely but one fact—the expulsion. You have certainly very clearly proved that Mr. Baker was neither supported by Mr. Prior nor bishop Burnet; but these are mere negatives. So is the question, whether he intended to compile an *Athenæ Cantabrigiænsis* or not; and on that you say but little, as you have not seen his papers in the Museum. I will examine the printed catalogue, and try if I can discover the truth thence, when I go to town. I will also borrow the new *Biographia*, as I wish to know more of the expulsion. As it is our only fact, one would not be too dry on it. Upon the whole, I think that it would be preferable to draw up an ample character of Mr. Baker, rather than a life. The one was most beautiful, amiable, conscientious; the other totally barren of more than one event: and though you have taken excellent pains to discover all that was possible, yet there is an obscurity hangs over the circumstances that even did attend him; as his connexion with bishop Crewe and his living. His own modesty comes out the brighter, but then it composes a character, not a life.

As to Mr. Kippis and his censures, I am perfectly indifferent to them. He betrays a pert malignity in hinting an intention so nearly balanced that neither ventured to attack the other; and the Prussian monarch falling back upon Silesia, the affair was, through the intervention of the empress of Russia, settled by negociation, which ended in the peace of Teschen. [Ed.]

of being severe on my father, for the pleasure of exerting a right I allowed, and do allow, to be a just one, though it is not just to do it for that reason; however, let him say his pleasure. The truth will not hurt my father; falsehood will recoil on the author.

His asserting that my censure of Mr. Addison's character of lord Somers is not to be justified, is a silly *ipse dixit*, as he does not, in truth cannot, show why it is not to be justified. The passage I alluded to is the argument of an old woman; and Mr. Addison's being a writer of true humour is not a justification of his reasoning like a superstitious gossip. In the other passage you have sent me, Mr. Kippis is perfectly in the right, and corrects me very justly. Had I ever seen archbishop Abbot's¹ Preface, with the outrageous flattery on, and lies of James I., I should certainly never have said, *Honest Abbot could not flatter*. I should have said and do say, I never saw grosser perversion of truth. One can almost excuse the faults of James when his bishops were such base sycophants. What can a king think of human nature, when it produces such wretches? I am too impartial to prefer puritans to clergymen, or *vice versa*, when Whitgift and Abbot only ran a race of servility and adulation: the result is, that priests of all religions are the same. James and his Levites were worthy of each other; the golden calf and the idolaters were well coupled, and it is pity they ever came out of the wilderness. I am very glad Mr. Tyson has escaped death and disappointment: pray wish him joy of both from me. Has not this Indian summer dispersed your complaints? We are told we are to be invaded. Our Abbots and Whitgifts now see with what successes and consequences their preaching up a crusade against America has been crowned! Archbishop Markham² may have an opportunity of exercising

¹ Dr. George Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury, born at Guildford, Surrey, 1562. In 1604, when the translation of the Scriptures now in use was commenced by direction of king James, Dr. Abbot was the second of eight divines of Oxford, to whom was committed the care of translating the whole New Testament, with the exception of the Epistles. He died at Croydon, 5th August 1633. [Ed.]

² Dr. William Markham, archbishop of York, translated to that See from Chester in 1776, upon the death of archbishop Drummond. He died in 1807, and was succeeded by the honourable Edward Venables Vernon, D.C.L., the present archbishop. [Ed.]

his martial prowess. I doubt he would resemble bishop Crewe more than good Mr. Baker. Let us respect those only who are Israelites indeed. I surrender Dr. Abbot to you. Church and presbytery are terms for monopolies. *Exalted notions of church matters* are contradictions in terms to the lowliness and humility of the gospel.—There is nothing sublime but the Divinity. Nothing is sacred but as his work. A tree or a brute stone is more respectable as such, than a mortal called an archbishop, or an edifice called a church, which, are the puny and perishable productions of men. Calvin and Wesley had just the same views as the Pope; power and wealth their objects. I abhor both, and admire Mr. Baker.

P.S. I like Popery as well as you, and have shown I do. I like it as I like chivalry and romance. They all furnish one with ideas and visions which presbyterianism does not. A Gothic church or a convent fills one with romantic dreams—but for the mysterious, the church in the abstract, it is a jargon that means nothing, or a great deal too much, and I reject it and its apostles, from Athanasius to bishop Keene.³

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY,

Saturday. July 18, 1778.

YESTERDAY evening the following notices were fixed up in Lloyd's coffee-house:

That a merchant in the city had received an express from France, that the Brest fleet, consisting of twenty-eight ships of the line, were sailed, with orders to burn, sink, and destroy.

That admiral Keppel was at Plymouth, and had sent to demand three more ships of the line to enable him to meet the French.

On these notices stocks sunk three-and-a-half per cent.

An account I have received this morning from a good hand says, that on Thursday the Admiralty received a letter from admiral Keppel, who was off the Land's end, saying that the

³ Dr. Edmund Keene, translated from Chester to the see of Ely in 1770. He died July 1781. [Ed.]

Worcester was in sight; that the Peggy had joined him, and had seen the Thunderer making sail for the fleet; that he was waiting for the Centaur, Terrible, and Vigilant; and that having received advice from lord Shulldham that the Shrewsbury was to sail from Plymouth on Thursday, he should likewise wait for her. His fleet will then consist of thirty ships of the line; and he hoped to have an opportunity of trying his strength with the French fleet on our own coast: if not, he would seek them on theirs.

The French fleet sailed on the 7th, consisting of thirty-one ships of the line, two fifty-gun ships, and eight frigates.

This state is probably more authentic than those at Lloyd's.

Thus you see how big the moment is! and, unless far more favourable to us in its burst than good sense allows one to promise, it must leave us greatly exposed. Can we expect to beat without considerable loss?—and then, where have we another fleet? I need not state the danger from a reverse.

The Spanish ambassador certainly arrived on Monday.

I shall go to town on Monday for a day or two; therefore, if you write to-morrow, direct to Arlington-street.

I add no more: for words are unworthy of the situation; and to blame now, would be childish. It is hard to be gamed for against one's consent; but when one's country is at stake, one must throw one's self out of the question. When one is old, and nobody, one must be whirled with the current, and shake one's wings like a fly, if one lights on a pebble. The prospect is so dark, that one shall rejoice at whatever does not happen, that may. Thus I have composed a sort of philosophy for myself, that reserves every possible chance. You want none of these artificial aids to your resolution. Invincible courage and immaculate integrity are not dependent on the folly of ministers or on the events of war. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 24th, 1778.

UPON reviewing your papers, dear sir, I think I can make more of them than I at first conceived. I have even commenced the life, and do not dislike my ideas for it, if the execu-

tion does but answer. At present I am interrupted by another task, which you, too, have wished me to undertake. In a word, somebody has published Chatterton's works, and charged me heavily for having discountenanced him. He even calls for the indignation of the public against me. It is somewhat singular, that I am to be offered up as a victim at the altar of a notorious impostor! but as many saints have been impostors, so many innocent persons have been sacrificed to them. However, I shall not be patient under this attack, but shall publish an answer—the narrative I mentioned to you.

I would, as you know, have avoided entering into this affair if I could; but as I do not despise public esteem, it is necessary to show how groundless the accusation is. Do not speak of my intention, as perhaps I shall not execute it immediately.

I am not in the least acquainted with the Mr. Bridges you mention, nor know that I ever saw him.

The tomb for Mr. Gray is actually erected, and at the generous expense of Mr. Mason, and with an epitaph of four lines, as you heard, and written by him—but the scaffolds are not yet removed.

I was in town yesterday, and intended to visit it, but there is digging a vault for the family of Northumberland, which obstructs the removal of the boards.

I rejoice in your amendment, and reckon it among my obligations to the fine weather, and hope it will be the most lasting of them.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE

Strawberry-hill, August 15, 1778.

YOUR observation of Rowley not being mentioned by William of Wyrcestre, is very strong, indeed, dear sir, and I shall certainly take notice of it. It has suggested to me that he is not named by Bale¹ or Pitts²—is he? Will you trouble

¹ John Bale, bishop of Ossory; the work to which Walpole alludes is his "Catalogus Scriptorum illustrium Majoris Brytannie." Folio; Basle, 1557-9. [Ed.]

² John Pitts wrote in opposition to Bale, "De illustribus Angliæ Scriptoribus." Paris, 1619; 4to. [Ed.]

yourself to look? I conclude he is not, or we should have heard of it. Rowley is the reverse of king Arthur, and all those heroes that have been expected a second time; he is to come again for the first time—I mean, as a great poet. My defence amounts to thirty pages of the size of this paper: yet I believe I shall not publish it. I abhor a controversy, and what is it to me whether people believe in an impostor or not? Nay, shall I convince every body of my innocence, though there is not the shadow of reason for thinking I was to blame? If I met a beggar in the street, and refused him sixpence, thinking him strong enough to work, and two years afterwards he should die of drinking, might not I be told I had deprived the world of a capital rope-dancer? In short, to show one's self sensible to such accusations, would only invite more; and since they accuse me of contempt, I will have it for my accusers.

My brass plate for bishop Walpole was copied exactly from the print in Dart's Westminster, of the tomb of Robert Dalby, bishop of Durham, with the sole alteration of the name. I shall return, as soon as I have time, to Mr. Baker's life, but I shall want to consult you, or, at least, the account of him in the new Biographia, as your notes want some dates. I am not satisfied yet with what I have sketched; but I shall correct it. My small talent was grown very dull.

This attack about Chatterton has a little revived it; but it warns me to have done; for, if one comes to want provocatives, the produce will soon be feeble. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 21, 1778.

I THINK it so very uncertain whether this letter will find you, that I write it merely to tell you I received yours to-day.

I recollect nothing particularly worth seeing in Sussex that you have not seen (for I think you have seen Coudray and Stansted, and I know you have Petworth), but Hurst Monceaux, near Battle; and I don't know whether it is not pulled down. The site of Arundel-castle is fine, and there are some good

tombs of the Fitzalans at the church, but little remains of the castle; in the room of which is a modern brick house; and in the late duke's time the ghost of a giant walked there, his grace said—but I suppose the present duke has laid it in the Red Sea—of claret.

Beside Knowle and Penshurst, I should think there were several seats of old families in Kent worth seeing; but I do not know them. I poked out Summer-hill¹ for the sake of the *Babylonienne* in Grammont; but it is now a mere farm-house. Don't let them persuade you to visit Leeds-castle, which is not worth seeing.

You have been near losing me and half-a-dozen fair cousins to day. The Goldsmiths' company dined in Mr. Shirley's field, next to Pope's. I went to Ham with my three Waldegrave nieces and miss Keppel, and saw them land, and dine in tents erected for them from the opposite shore. You may imagine how beautiful the sight was in such a spot and in such a day! I stayed and dined at Ham, and after dinner lady Dysart with lady Bridget Tollemache took our four nieces on the water to see the return of the barges, but were to set me down at lady Browne's. We were, with a footman and the two watermen, ten in a little boat. As we were in the middle of the river, a larger boat full of people drove directly upon us on purpose. I believe they were drunk. We called to them, to no purpose; they beat directly against the middle of our little skiff—but, thank you, did not do us the least harm—no thanks to them. Lady Malpas was in lord Strafford's garden, and gave us for gone. In short, Neptune never would have had so beautiful a prize as the four girls.

I hear an express has been sent to * * * * to offer him the mastership of the horse. I had a mind to make you guess, but you never can — to lord Exeter.

Pray let me know the moment you return to Park-place.

¹ Formerly a country seat of queen Elizabeth's, and the residence of Charles the Second when the court was at Tunbridge. [Ed.]

TO THE REV MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 22, 1778.

I BEG you will feel no uneasiness, dear sir, at having shown my name to Dr. Glyn. I can never suspect you, who are giving me fresh proofs of your friendship, and solicited for my reputation, of doing any thing unkind. It is true I do not think I shall publish any thing about Chatterton. Is not it an affront to Innocence, not to be perfectly satisfied in her? My pamphlet, for such it would be, is four times as large as the narrative in your hands, and I think would not discredit me—but, in truth, I am grown much fonder of truth than fame; and scribblers or their patrons shall not provoke me to sacrifice the one to the other. Lord Hardwicke, I know, has long been my enemy,—latterly, to get a sight of the Conway papers, he has paid great court to me, which, to show how little I regarded his enmity, I let him see, at least the most curious. But as I set as little value on his friendship, I did not grant another of his requests. Indeed, I have made more than one foe by not indulging the variety of those who have made application to me; and I am obliged to them, when they augment my contempt by quarrelling with me for that refusal. It was the case of Mr. Masters, and is now of lord Hardwicke. He solicited me to reprint his *Bœotian* volume of sir Dudley Carleton's papers, for which he had two motives. The first he inherited from his father, the desire of saving money; for though his fortune is so much larger than mine, he knew I would not let out my press for hire, but should treat him with the expense, as I have done for those I have obliged. The second was, that the rarity of my editions makes them valuable, and though I cannot make men read dull books, I can make them purchase them. His lordship, therefore, has bad grace in affecting to overlook one, whom he had in vain courted, yet he again is grown my enemy, because I would not be my own. For my writings, they do not depend on him or the venal authors he patronizes (I doubt very frugally), but on their own merits or demerits. It is from men of sense they must expect their sentence, not from boobies and hireling authors, whom I have always shunned, with the whole

fry of minor wits, critics, and monthly censors. I have not seen the Review you mention, nor ever do, but when something particular is pointed out to me. Literary squabbles I know preserve one's name, when one's work will not; but I despise the fame that depends on scolding, till one is remembered, and remembered by whom? The scavengers of literature! Reviewers are like sextons, who in a charnel-house can tell you to what John Thompson or to what Tom Matthews such a scull or such belonged—but who wishes to know? The fame that is only to be found in such vaults, is like the fires that burn unknown in tombs, and go out as fast as they are discovered. Lord Hardwicke is welcome to live among the dead if he likes it, and can contrive to live no where else.

Chatterton did abuse me under the title of Baron of Otranto, but unluckily the picture is more like Dr. Milles and Chatterton's own devotees, than to me, who am but a recreant antiquary, and, as the poor lad found by experience, did not swallow every fragment that was offered to me as an antique; though that is a feature he has bestowed upon me.

I have seen, too, the criticism you mention on the Castle of Otranto, in the preface to the Old English Baron. It is not at all oblique, but though mixed with high compliments, directly attacks the visionary part, which, says the author or authoress, makes one laugh. I do assure you, I have not had the smallest inclination to return that attack. It would even be ungrateful, for the work is a professed imitation of mine, only stripped of the marvellous—and so entirely stripped, except in one awkward attempt at a ghost or two, that it is the most insipid dull nothing you ever saw. It certainly does not make one laugh; for what makes one doze, seldom makes one merry.

I am very sorry to have talked for near three pages on what relates to myself, who should be of no consequence, if people did not make me so, whether I will or not. My not replying to them, I hope is a proof I do not seek to make myself the topic of conversation.—How very foolish are the squabbles of authors! They buzz and are troublesome to-day, and then repose for ever on some shelf in a college library, close by their antagonists, like Henry VI. and Edward IV. at Windsor.

I shall be in town in a few days, and will send you the heads of painters, which I left there; and along with them for your-

self a translation of a French play,¹ that I have just printed there. It is not for your reading, but as one of the Strawberry editions, and one of the rarest, for I have printed but seventy-five copies.

It was to oblige lady Craven, the translatress; and will be an aggravation of my offence to Sir Dudley's State Papers.

I hope this Elysian summer, for it has been above Indian, has dispersed all your complaints. Yet it does not agree with fruit; the peaches and nectarines are shrivelled to the size of damsons, and half of them drop. Yet you remember what portly bellies the peaches had at Paris, where it is generally as hot. I suppose our fruit trees are so accustomed to rain, that they don't know how to behave without it. Adieu!

Yours ever.

P.S. I can divert you with a new adventure, that has happened to me in the literary way. About a month ago, I received a letter from a Mr. Jonathan Scott, at Shrewsbury, to tell me he was possessed of a MS. of lord Herbert's Account of the Court of France,² which he designed to publish by subscription, and which he desired me to subscribe to, and to assist in the publication. I replied, that having been obliged to the late lord Powis and his widow, I could not meddle with any such thing, without knowing that it had the consent of the present earl and his mother.

Another letter, commending my reserve, told me Mr. Scott had applied for it formerly, and would again now. This showed me they did not consent. I have just received a third letter, owning the approbation is not yet arrived, but to keep me employed in the mean time, the modest Mr. Scott, whom I never saw, nor know more of than I did of Chatterton, proposes to me to get his fourth son a place in the civil department in India: the father not choosing it should be in the military, his three elder sons being engaged in that branch already.—If

¹ "The Sleep Walker," Strawberry-hill, 1778. It was translated from the French of Pont de Veyle, by lady Craven, afterwards Margravine of Anspach. [Ed.]

² By lord Herbert's Account of the Court of France, it is presumed Mr. Scott referred to his "Letters written during his residence at the French Court," and which were first published from the originals in the edition of his Life which appeared in 1826. [Ed.]

this fourth son breaks his neck, I suppose it will be laid to my charge!

P.S. 25th. I shall send the prints to the coach to-morrow.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

September 1, 1778.

I HAVE now seen the Critical Review, with lord Hardwicke's note, in which I perceive the sensibility of your friendship for me, dear sir, but no rudeness on his part. Contemptuous it was to reprint Jane Shore's letter without any notice of my having given it before: the apology, too, is not made to me—but I am not affected by such incivilities, that imply more ill-will than boldness. As I expected more from your representation, I believe I expressed myself with more warmth than the occasion deserved; and, as I love to be just, I will, now I am perfectly cool, be so to lord H. His dislike of me was meritorious in him, as I conclude it was founded on my animosity to *his* father, as mine had been, from attachment to *my own*, who was basely betrayed by the late earl. The present has given me formerly many peevish marks of enmity; and I suspect, I don't know if justly, that he was the mover of the cabal in the Antiquarian Society against me—but all their understandings were of a size that made me smile rather than provoke me. The earl, as I told you, has since been rather wearisome in applications to me, which I received very civilly, but encouraged no farther. When he wanted me to be his printer, I own I was not good Christian enough, not to be pleased with refusing, and yet in as well-bred excuses as I could form, pleading, what was true at the time, as you know, that I had laid down my press—but so much for this idle story. I shall think no more of it, but adhere to my specific system. The antiquarians will be as ridiculous as they used to be; and, since it is impossible to infuse taste into them, they will be as dry and dull as their predecessors. One may revive what perished, but it will perish again, if more life is not breathed into it than it enjoyed originally. Facts, dates, and names will never please the multitude, unless there is some style and manner to recommend

them, and unless some novelty is struck out from their appearance. The best merit of the Society lies in their prints; for their volumes, no mortal will ever touch them but an antiquary. Their Saxon and Danish discoveries are not worth more than monuments of the Hottentots, and for Roman remains in Britain, they are upon a foot with what ideas we should get of Inigo Jones, if somebody was to publish views of huts and houses, that our officers run up at Senegal and Goree. Bishop Lyttleton used to torment me with barrows and Roman camps, and I would as soon have attended to the turf graves in our church-yards. I have no curiosity to know how awkward and clumsy men have been in the dawn of arts, or in their decay.

I exempt you entirely from my general censure on antiquaries, both for your singular modesty in publishing nothing yourself, and for collecting stone and bricks for others to build with. I wish your materials may ever fall into good hands—perhaps they will! our empire is falling to pieces! we are relapsing to a little island. In that state, men are apt to inquire how great their ancestors have been; and, when a kingdom is past doing any thing, the few, that are studious, look into the memorials of past time; nations, like private persons, seek lustre from their progenitors, when they have none in themselves, and the further they are from the dignity of their source. When half its colleges are tumbled down, the ancient university of Cambridge will revive from your collections, and you will be quoted as a living witness that saw its splendour.

Since I began this letter, I have had another curious adventure. I was in the Holbein chamber, when a chariot stopped at my door. A letter was brought up—and who should be below but—Dr. Kippis. The letter was to announce himself and his business, flattered me on my writings, desired my assistance, and particularly my direction and aid for his writing the life of my father. I desired he would walk up, and received him very civilly, taking not the smallest notice of what you had told me of his flirts at me in the new Biographia.

I told him, if I had been applied to I could have pointed out many errors in the old edition, but as they were chiefly in the printing, I supposed they would be corrected. With regard to

my father's life, I said, it might be partiality, but I had such confidence in my father's virtues, that I was satisfied the more his life was examined, the clearer they would appear. That I also thought that the life of any man written under the direction of his family, did nobody honour; and that as I was persuaded my father's would stand the test, I wished that none of his relations should interfere in it. That I did not doubt but the doctor would speak impartially, and that was all I desired. He replied, that he did suppose I thought in that manner, and that all he asked was to be assisted in facts and dates. I said, if he would please to write the life first, and then communicate it to me, I would point out any errors in facts that I should perceive. He seemed mightily well satisfied—and so we parted—but is it not odd, that people are continually attacking me, and then come to me for assistance?—but when men write for profit, they are not very delicate.

I have resumed Mr. Baker's life, and pretty well arranged my plan, but I shall have little time to make any progress till October, as I am going soon to make some visits.

I hope you have received the heads of the painters.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 18, 1778.

I WRITE a few words to satisfy you, dear sir, that I received both your letters together. If I did not mention them, you might think the franked one had strayed.

I rejoice that the heat of the weather has been so serviceable to you, and I hope the little return of tenderness in your feet will not last, as the season continues so dry.

I have run through the new articles in the *Biographia*, and think them performed but by a heavy hand. Some persons have not trusted the characters of their ancestors, as I did my father's, to their own merits. On the contrary, I have met with one whose corruption is attempted to be palliated by imputing its punishment to the revenge of *my father*—which, by the way, is confessing the guilt of the convict.

This was the late lord Barrington,¹ who, I believe, was a very dirty fellow; for, besides being expelled the House of Commons on the affair of the Harburg lottery, he was reckoned to have twice sold the dissenters to the court; but in short, what credit can a *Biographia Britannica*, which ought to be a standard work, deserve, when the editor is a mercenary writer, who runs about to relations for directions, and adopts any tale they deliver to him? This very instance is a proof that it is not a jot more creditable than a peerage. The authority is said to be a nephew of judge Foster (consequently, I suppose, a friend of judge Barrington), and he pretends to have found a scrap of paper, nobody knows on what occasion written, that seems to be connected with nothing, and is called a palliative, if not an excuse of lord B * * * 's crime.

A man is expelled from parliament for a scandalous job, and it is called a sufficient excuse to say the minister was his enemy; and this near forty years after the death of both! and without any impeachment of the justice of the sentence: instead of which we are told that lord B. was *suspected* of having offended sir R. W. who took that opportunity of being revenged. Supposing he did, which at most you see is a suspicion grounded on a suspicion, it would at least imply that he had found a good opportunity—a most admirable acquittal! Sir R. Walpole was expelled for having indorsed a note that was not for his own benefit, nor ever supposed to be, and it was the act of a whole outrageous party; yet, abandoned as parliaments sometimes are, a minister would not find them very complaisant in gratifying his private revenge against a member without some notorious crime. Not a syllable is said of any defence the culprit made; and, had my father been guilty of such violence and injustice, it is totally incredible that he, whose minutest acts and his most innocent, were so rigorously scrutinized, tortured, and blackened, should never have heard that act of power complained of. The present lord Barrington who opposed him saw his fall, and the secret committee appointed to canvass his life, when a retrospect of twenty years was desired, and only ten allowed, would certainly have pleaded for the longer term,

¹ John Shute, first viscount Barrington in the peerage of Ireland, expelled the House of Commons 15th February 1722, for having promoted and carried on that fraudulent undertaking the Harborough lottery. [Ed.]

had he had any thing to say in behalf of his father's sentence. Would so warm a patriot then, though so obedient a courtier now, have suppressed the charge to this hour? This lord B., when I was going to publish the second edition of my Noble Authors, begged it as a favour of me to suppress all mention of his father—a strong presumption that he was ashamed of him—I am well repaid! but I am certainly now at liberty to record that good man. I shall—and shall take notice of the satisfactory manner in which his sons have whitewashed their patriarch!

I recollect a saying of the present peer that will divert you when contrasted with forty years of servility, which even in this age makes him a proverb. It was in his days of virtue. He said, "If I should ever be so unhappy as to have a place that would make it necessary for me to have a fine coat on a birth day, I would pin a bank bill on my sleeve." He had a place in less than two years, I think—and has had almost every place that every administration could bestow. Such were the patriots that opposed that excellent man, my father; allowed by all parties to have been as incapable of revenge as ever minister was—but whose experience of mankind drew from him that memorable saying, "that very few men ought to be prime ministers, for it is not fit many should know how bad men are;"—one can see a little of it without being a prime minister. If one shuns mankind and flies to books, one meets with their meanness and falsehood there, too! one has reason to say, there is but one good, that is God. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

October 14, 1778.

I THINK you take in no newspapers, nor I believe condescend to read any more modern than the *Paris à la Main* at the time of the *Ligue*—consequently you have not seen a new scandal on my father, which you will not wonder offends me. You cannot be interested in his defence, but, as it comprehends some very curious anecdotes, you will not grudge my indulging myself to a friend in vindicating a name so dear to me.

In the accounts of lady Chesterfield's¹ death and fortune, it is said that the late king, at the instigation of sir R. W., burnt his father's will, which contained a large legacy to that, his supposed, daughter, and I believe his real one, for she was very like him, as her brother, general Schulembourg, is in black, to the late king. The fact of suppressing the will is indubitably true, the instigator most false, as I can demonstrate thus :—

When the news arrived of the death of George I., my father carried the account from lord Townshend to the then prince of Wales.² One of the first acts of royalty is for the new monarch to make a speech to the privy council. Sir Robert asked the king who he would please to have draw the speech, which was, in fact, asking, who was to be prime minister; to which his majesty replied, sir Spencer Compton. It is a wonderful anecdote, and but little known, that the new premier, a very dull man, could not draw the speech, and the person to whom he applied was the deposed premier. The queen, who favoured my father, observed how unfit a man was for successor, who was reduced to beg assistance of his predecessor. The council met as soon as possible, the next morning at latest. There archbishop Wake, with whom one copy of the will had been deposited, (as another was, I think, with the duke of Wolfenbuttle, who had a pension for sacrificing it, which, *I know*, the late duke of Newcastle transacted), advanced, and delivered the will to the king, who put it into his pocket, and went out of council without opening it, the archbishop not having courage or presence of mind to desire it to be read, as he ought to have done.

These circumstances, which I solemnly assure you are strictly true, prove that my father neither advised, nor was consulted; nor is it credible that the king in one night's time should have passed from the intention of disgracing him, to make him his bosom confidant on so delicate an affair.

¹ Malosina de Schulembourg, a natural daughter of king George I., by Miss Schulembourg, afterwards created duchess of Kendal. She was created, in 1722, countess of Walsingham and baroness of Aldborough, and was the widow of Philip Dormer, the celebrated earl of Chesterfield, who died in 1773. [Ed.]

² Sir Robert Walpole, in his anxiety to be the first to convey the intelligence, killed two horses. [Ed.]

I was once talking to the late lady Suffolk, the former mistress, on that extraordinary event. She said, "I cannot justify the deed to the legatees, but towards his father, the late king was justifiable, for George I. had burnt two wills made in favour of George II." I suppose they were the testaments of the duke and duchess of Zell, parents of George I.'s wife, whose treatment of her they always resented.

I said, *I know* the transactions of the duke of N. The late lord Waldegrave showed me a letter from that duke to the first earl of Waldegrave, then ambassador at Paris, with directions about that transaction, or, at least, about payment of the pension, I forget which. I have somewhere, but cannot turn to it now, a memorandum of that affair, and who the prince was, whom I may mistake in calling duke of Wolfenbuttle. There was a third copy of the will, I likewise forget with whom deposited.

The newspaper says, which is true, that lord Chesterfield filed a bill in chancery against the late king to oblige him to produce the will, and was silenced, I think, by payment of 20,000*l*. There was another legacy to his own daughter the queen of Prussia, which has at times been, and, I believe, is still claimed by the king of Prussia.

Do not mention any part of this story, but it is worth preserving, as I am sure you are satisfied with my scrupulous veracity. It may perhaps be authenticated hereafter by collateral evidence that may come out. If ever true history does come to light, my father's character will have just honour paid to it. Lord Chesterfield, one of his sharpest enemies, has not, with all his prejudices, left a very unfavourable account of him, and it would alone be raised by a comparison of their two characters. Think of one who calls sir Robert the corrupter of youth, leaving a system of education to poison them from their nursery! Chesterfield, Pulteney, and Bolingbroke were the saints that reviled my father!

I beg your pardon, but you will allow me to open my heart to you when it is full.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

October 23, 1778.

* * * * * HAVING thus told you all I know, I shall add a few words, to say I conclude you have known as much, by my not having heard from you. Should the post-office or secretary's office set their wits at work to bring to light all the intelligence contained under the above hiatus, I am confident they will discover nothing, though it gives an exact description of all they have been about themselves.

My personal history is very short. I have had an assembly and the rheumatism—and am buying a house—and it rains—and I shall plant the roses against my treillage to-morrow. Thus you know what I have done, suffered, am doing, and shall do. Let me know as much of you, in quantity, not in quality. Introductions to and conclusions of letters are as much out of fashion, as *to*, *at*, &c. on letters. This sublime age reduces every thing to its quintessence: all periphrases and expletives are so much in disuse, that I suppose soon the only way of making love will be to say "*Lie down.*" Luckily, the lawyers will not part with any synonymous words, and will, consequently, preserve the redundancies of our language—Dixi.

 TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

October 26, 1778.

MR. KERRICK shall have a ticket, dear sir, to see Strawberry whenever he wishes for it next spring.

I have finished the life of Mr. Baker, will have it transcribed, and send it to you. I have omitted several little particulars that are in your notes, for two reasons: one, because so much is said in the Biographia; and the other, because I have rather drawn a character of him, than meant a circumstantial life. In the justice I have done to him, I trust I shall have pleased you. I have much greater doubt of that effect in what I have said of his principles and party. It is odd, perhaps, to have made use

of the life of a high churchman for expatiating on my own very opposite principles, but it gave me so fair an opportunity of discussing those points, that I very naturally embraced it. I have done due honour to his immaculate conscience, but have not spared the cause in which he fell,—or rather rose,—for the ruin of his fortune was the triumph of his virtue.

As you know I do not love the press, you may be sure I have no thoughts of printing this life at present; nay, I beg you will not only not communicate it, but take care it never should be printed without my consent. I have written what presented itself; I should perhaps choose to soften several passages; and I trust it to you for your own satisfaction, not as a finished thing, or as I am determined it should remain.

Another favour I beg of you is to criticise it as largely and severely as you please: you have a right so to do, as it is built with your own materials; nay, you have a right to scold, if I have, nay, since I have employed them so differently from your intention. All my excuse is, that you communicated them to one who did not deceive you, and who you was pretty sure would make nearly the use of them that he has made. Was not you? did not you suspect a little that I could not even write a Life of Mr. Baker without talking Whiggism!—Well, if I have ill-treated the cause, I am sure I have exalted the martyr. I have thrown new light on his virtue from his notes on the Gazettes, and you will admire him more, though you may love me less, for my chymistry. I should be truly sorry if I did lose a scruple of your friendship. You have ever been as candid to me, as Mr. Baker was to his antagonists, and our friendship is another proof that men of the most opposite principles can agree in every thing else, and not quarrel about them.

As my MS. contains above twenty pages of my writing on larger paper than this, you cannot receive it speedily—however, I have performed my promise, and I hope you will not be totally discontent, though I am not satisfied with myself. I have executed by snatches and by long interruptions; and not having been eager about it, I find I wanted that ardour to inspire me; another proof of what I told you, that my small talent is waning, and wants provocatives. It shall be a warning to me. Adieu!

P. S. I have long had a cast of one part of the great seal of queen Henrietta, that you mention, as you may find in the catalogue of Strawberry in the green closet. It is her figure under a canopy.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Nov. 4, 1778.

YOU will see by my secretary's hand that I am not able to write myself; indeed, I am in bed with the gout in six places, like Daniel in the den; but, as the lions are slumbering round me, and leave me a moment of respite, I employ it to give you one. You have misunderstood me, dear sir; I have not said a word that will lower Mr. Baker's character; on the contrary, I think he will come out brighter from my ordeal. In truth, as I have drawn out his life from your papers, it is a kind of political epic, in which his conscience is the hero that always triumphs over his interest upon the most opposite occasions. Shall you dislike your saint in this light?

I had transcribed about half when I fell ill last week. If the gout does not seize my right hand, I shall probably have full leisure to finish it during my recovery, but shall certainly not be able to send it to you by Mr. Lort.

Your promise fully satisfies me. My life can never extend to twenty years. Any one that saw me this moment would not take me for a Methusalem. I have not strength to dictate more now, except to add, that if Mr. Nicholls has sent my narrative about Chatterton, it can only be my letter to Mr. B * * *, of which you have a copy; the larger one has not yet been out of my own house.

Yours most sincerely.

P. S. I forgot to say that you certainly shall have every scrap of your MSS. carefully returned to you; and you will find that I have barely sipped here and there, and exhausted nothing.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Jan. 3, 1779.

AT last, after ten weeks, I have been able to remove hither, in hopes change of air and the frost will assist my recovery; though I am not one of those ancients that forget the register, and think they are to be as well as ever after every fit of illness. As yet I can barely creep about the room in the middle of the day.

I have made my printer (now my secretary) copy out the rest of Mr. Baker's life, for my own hands will barely serve to write necessary letters, and complains even of them. If you know of any very trusty person passing between London and Cambridge, I would send it to you, but should not care to trust it by the coach, nor to any giddy undergraduate that comes to town to see a play; and besides, I mean to return you your own notes. I will say no more than I have said in my apology to you for the manner in which I have written this life. With regard to Mr. Baker himself, I am confident you will find that I have done full justice to his work and character. I do not expect you to approve the inferences I draw against some other persons—and yet, if his conduct was meritorious, it would not be easy to excuse those who were *active* after doing what he would not do. You will not understand this sentence till you have seen the Life. I hope you have not been untiled or unpailed by the tempest on new-year's morning.¹ I have lost two beautiful elms in a row before my windows here, and had the sky-light demolished in town. Lady Pomfret's Gothic house in my street lost one of the stone towers, like those at King's chapel, and it was beaten through the roof. The top of our cross, too, at Ampthill was thrown down, as I hear from lady Ossory this morning. I remember to have been told that bishop Kidder and his wife were killed in their bed in the palace in Gloucester in 1709, and yet his heirs were sued for dilapidations.

Lord de Ferrers, who deserves his ancient honours, is going

¹ On the morning of the 1st January 1779, London was visited by the most violent tempest ever known. Scarcely a public building in the metropolis escaped without damage. [Ed.]

to repair the castle at Tamworth, and has flattered me that he will consult me. He has a violent passion for ancestry—and, consequently, I trust will not stake the patrimony of Ferrarii, Townshends, and Comptons, at the hazard table. A little pride would not hurt our nobility, cock and hen. Adieu, dear sir; and give me a good account of yourself.

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, Jan. 9, 1779.

YOUR flight to Bath would have much surprised me, if Mr. C., who, I think, heard it from Stanley, had not prepared me for it. Since you was amused, I am glad you went, especially as you escaped being initiated in Mrs. Miller's follies at Bath Easton, which you would have mentioned. She would have sent some trapes of a muse to press you, had she known what good epigrams you write.

I went to Strawberry partly out of prudence, partly from *ennui*. I thought it best to air myself before I go in and out of hot rooms here, and had my house thoroughly warmed for a week previously, and then only stirred from the red room to the blue on the same floor. I stayed five days, and was neither the better nor the worse for it. I was quite tired with having neither company, books, nor amusement of any kind. Either from the emptiness of the town, or that ten weeks of gout have worn out the patience of all my acquaintance, but I do not see three persons in three days. This gives me but an uncomfortable prospect for my latter days: it is but probable that I may be a cripple in a fit or two more, if I have strength to go through them; and as that will be long life, one outlives one's acquaintance. I cannot make new acquaintance, nor interest myself at all about the young, except those that belong to me; nor does that go beyond contributing to their pleasures, without having much satisfaction in their conversation—But—one must take every thing as it comes, and make the best of it. I have had a much happier life than I deserve, and than millions that deserve better. I should be very weak if I could not bear the uncomfortableness of old age, when I can afford what comforts

it is capable of. How many poor old people have none of them! I am ashamed whenever I am peevish, and recollect that I have fire and servants to help me.

I hear admiral Keppel is in high spirits with the great respect and zeal expressed for him. In my own opinion, his constitution will not stand the struggle.¹ I am very uneasy, too, for the duke of R * * * *, who is at Portsmouth, and will be at least as much agitated.

Sir * * * * * has written a large pamphlet, and a very good one. It is to show, that whenever the Grecian republics taxed dependents, the latter resisted, and shook off the yoke. He has printed but twelve copies: the duke of G * * * sent me one of them. There is an anecdote of my father, on the authority of Old Jack White, which I doubt. It says, he would not go on with the excise scheme, though his friends advised it. I cannot speak to the particular event, as I was then at school; but it was more like him to have yielded against his sentiments, to Mr. Pelham and his candid—or say, plausible and timid friends. I have heard him say, that he never did give up his opinion to such men but he always repented it. However, the anecdote in the book would be more to his honour. But what a strange man is sir * * * ! I suppose now he has written this book he will change his opinion, and again be for carrying on the war—or, if he does not know his own mind for two years together, why will he take places, to make every body doubt his honesty?

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

January 15, 1779.

I SEND you by Dr. Jacob, as you desired, my life of Mr. Baker, and with it your own materials. I beg you will commu-

¹ Some charges having been brought against admiral Keppel for his conduct at the battle of Ushant, by sir Hugh Palliser, his vice-admiral, he was tried for the same, and not only unanimously acquitted, but the prosecution declared malicious. This verdict gave such general satisfaction that London was illuminated for two nights, upon one of which a mob, consisting in a great part of sailors who had served under Keppel, broke all the windows in the house of his accuser. The city of London voted the admiral the freedom of the corporation. [Ed.]

nicate my MS. to nobody—but, if you think it worth your trouble, I will consent to your transcribing it—but on one condition, and a silly one for me to exact, who am as old as you, and broken to pieces, and very unlikely to survive you; but should so improbable a thing happen, I must exact that you will keep your transcript sealed up, with orders written on the cover to be restored to me in case of an accident, for I should certainly dislike very much to see it printed without my consent.

I should not think of your copying it, if you did not love to *transcribe*, and sometimes things of as little value as my MS. I shall beg to have it returned to me by a safe hand as soon as you can, for I have nothing but the foul copy, which nobody can read, I believe, but I and my secretary.

I am actually printing my justification about Chatterton, but only two hundred copies to give away; for I hate calling in the whole town to a fray, of which otherwise probably not one thousand persons would ever hear.

You shall have a copy as soon as ever it is finished, which my printer says will be in three weeks.

You know my printer is my secretary too: do not imagine I am giving myself airs of a numerous household of officers. I shall be glad to see the letter of Mr. Baker you mentioned. You will perceive two or three notes in my MS. in a different hand from mine, or that of my *amanuensis* (still the same officer); they were added by a person I lent it to, and I have effaced part of the last.

I must finish lest Dr. Jacob should call, and my parcel not be ready. I hope your sore throat is gone; my gout has returned again a little with taking the air only, but did not stay—however, I am still confined, and almost ready to remain so, to prevent disappointment.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, Jan. 28, 1779.

I WRITE in as much hurry as you did, dear sir, and thank you for the motive of yours: mine is to prevent your fatiguing

yourself in copying my MS., for which I am not in the least haste: pray keep it till another safe conveyance presents itself. You may bring the gout, that is, I am sorry to hear, flying about you, into your hand, by wearying it.

How can you tell me I may well be cautious about my MS., and yet advise me to print it?—no—I shall not provoke nests of hornets, till I am dust, as they will be, too.

If I dictated tales when ill in my bed, I must have been worse than I thought; for, as I know nothing of it, I must have been light-headed. Mr. Lort was certainly misinformed, though he seems to have told you the story kindly to the honour of my philosophy or spirits—but I had rather have no fame than what I do not deserve.

I am fretful or low-spirited at times in the gout, like other weak old men, and have less to boast than most men. I have some strange things in my drawer, even wilder than the *Castle of Otranto*, and called *Hieroglyphic Tales*¹—but they were not written lately, nor in the gout, nor, whatever they may seem, written when I was out of my senses. I showed one or two of them to a person since my recovery, who may have mentioned them, and occasioned Mr. Lort's misintelligence. I did not at all perceive that the latter looked ill; and hope he is quite recovered. You shall see Chatterton soon. Adieu!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

February 4, 1779.

I HAVE received the MS., and though you forbid my naming the subject more, I love truth, and truth in a friend so much, that I must tell you, that so far from taking your sincerity ill, I had much rather you should act with your native honest sincerity than say you was pleased with my MS. I have always tried as much as is in human nature to divest myself of the self-love of an author; in the present case, I had less difficulty than ever, for I never thought my life of Mr. Baker one of my least indifferent works. You might, believe me, have sent me your

¹ Of these "*Hieroglyphic Tales*" Walpole printed seven copies, in small 8vo. in 1785. [Ed.]

long letter, whatever it contained; it would not have made a momentary cloud between us. I have not only friendship, but great gratitude for you, for a thousand instances of kindness—and should detest any writing of mine that made a breach with a friend, and still more, if it could make me forget obligations.

Yours most cordially.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

February 18, 1779.

I sent you my *Chattertoniad*¹ last week, in hopes it would sweeten your pouting; but I find it has not, or has miscarried; for you have not acknowledged the receipt with your usual punctuality.

Have you seen Hasted's new *History of Kent*?² I am sailing through it, but am stopped every minute by careless mistakes. They tell me the author has good materials, but is very negligent; and so I perceive. He has not even given a list of monuments in the churches, which I do not remember in any history of a county—but he is rich in pedigrees; though I suppose they have many errors, too, as I have found some in those I am acquainted with. It is unpardonable to be inaccurate in a work in which one nor expects nor demands any thing but fidelity.

We have a great herald arising in a very noble race, lord de Ferrars. I hope to make him a Gothic architect, too, for he is going to repair Tamworth Castle, and flatters me that I shall give him sweet counsel. I enjoin him to Kernellare. Adieu!

Yours ever.

¹ "A Letter to the Editor of the *Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton*." Strawberry-hill, 1779. 8vo. [Ed.]

² "The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent. By Edward Hasted." Canterbury 1778-99. folio. 4 volumes. A second and improved edition. Canterbury, 1797-1801. 8vo. 12 volumes. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, March 28, 1779.

YOUR last called for no answer; and I have so little to tell you, that I only write to-day to avoid the air of remissness. I came hither on Friday, for this last week has been too hot to stay in London; but March is arrived this morning with his north-easterly malice, and I suppose will assert his old-style claim to the third of April. The poor infant apricots will be the victim to that Herod of the almanack. I have been much amused with new travels through Spain by a Mr. Swinburne¹—at least with the Alhambra, of the inner parts of which there are two beautiful prints. The Moors were the most polished, and had most taste of any people in the Gothic ages; and I hate the knave Ferdinand and his bigoted queen for destroying them. These new travels are simple, and do tell you a little more than late voyagers, by whose accounts one would think there was nothing in Spain but muleteers and fandangos. In truth, there does not seem to be much worth seeing but prospects—and those, unless I were a bird, I would never visit, when the accommodations are so wretched.

Mr. Cumberland has given the town a masque, called *Calyпсо*, which is a prodigy of dulness. Would you believe, that such a sentimental writer would be so gross as to make *cantharides* one of the ingredients of a love potion for enamouring *Telemachus*? If you think I exaggerate, here are the lines:

“To these, the hot Hispanian fly
Shall bid his languid pulse beat high.”

Proteus and *Antiope* are *Minerva*’s missionaries for securing the prince’s virtue, and in recompense they are married, and crowned king and queen!

I have bought at *Hudson*’s sale a fine design of a chimney-piece, by *Holbein*, for *Henry VIII.*—If I had a room left, I

¹ Travels through Spain in the years 1775 and 1776; in which several Monuments* of Roman and Moorish Architecture are illustrated by accurate Drawings taken on the spot. By Henry Swinburne. London, 1779. 4to. Mr. Swinburne published, in 1783-5, his Travels in the Two Sicilies during the years 1777, 8, 9, and 1780. [Ed.]

would erect. It is certainly not so Gothic as that in my Holbein room; but there is a great deal of taste for that bastard style; perhaps it was executed at Nonsuch. I do intend, under Mr. Essex's inspection, to begin my offices next spring.—It is late in my day, I confess, to return to brick and mortar; but I shall be glad to perfect my plan, or the next possessor will marry my castle to a Doric stable. There is a perspective through two or three rooms in the Alhambra, that might easily be improved into Gothic, though there seems but small affinity between them; and they might be finished within with Dutch tiles, and painting, or bits of ordinary marble, as there must be gilding. Mosaic seems to be their chief ornaments, for walls, ceilings, and floors. Fancy must sport in the furniture, and mottoes might be gallant, and would be very Arabesque. I would have a mixture of colours, but with a strict attention to harmony and taste; and some one should predominate, as supposing it the favourite colour of the lady who was sovereign of the knight's affections who built the house. Carpets are classically Mahometans, and fountains—but, alas! our climate till last summer was never romantic! Were I not so old I would at least build a Moorish novel—for you see my head runs on Granada—and by taking the most picturesque parts of the Mahometan and Catholic religions, and with the mixture of African and Spanish names, one might make something very agreeable—at least, I will not give the hint to Mr. Cumberland. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 12, 1779.

As your gout was so concise, I will not condole on it, but I am sorry you are liable to it if you do but take the air. Thank you for telling me of the vendible curiosities at the alderman's. For St. Peter's portraits to hang to a fairie's watch. I shall not think of it, both as I do not believe it very like, and as it is composed of invisible writing, for which my eyes are not young enough. In truth, I have almost left off making purchases; I have neither room for any thing more, nor inclination

for them, as I reckon every thing very dear when one has so little time to enjoy it. However, I cannot say but the plates by Rubens do tempt me a little—yet, as I do not care to buy even Rubens in a poke, I should wish to know if the alderman would let me see if it were but one. Would he be persuaded? I would pay for the carriage, though I should not buy them.

Lord de Ferrers will be infinitely happy with the sight of the pedigree, and I will certainly tell him of it, and how kind you are.

Strype's account, or rather Stow's, of Richard's person is very remarkable—but I have done with endeavouring at truth. Weeds grow more naturally than what one plants. I hear your Cantabrigians are still unshaken Chattertonians. Many men are about falsehood like girls about the first man that makes love to them: a handsomer, a richer, or even a sincerer lover cannot eradicate the first impression—but a sillier swain, or a sillier legend, sometimes gets into the head of the miss or the learned man, and displaces the antecedent folly. Truth's kingdom is not of this world.

I do not know whether our clergy are growing Mahometans or not: they certainly are not what they profess themselves—but as you and I should not agree perhaps in assigning the same defects to them, I will not enter on a subject which I have promised you to drop. All I allude to now is, the shocking murder of miss Reay by a divine.¹ In my own opinion, we are growing more fit for Bedlam, than for Mahomet's paradise. The poor criminal in question, I am persuaded is mad—and the misfortune is, the law does not know how to define the shades of madness; and thus there are twenty out-pensioners of Bedlam, for one that is confined. You, dear sir, have chosen

¹ On the 7th April 1779. Miss Reay, who had been the mistress of lord Sandwich for twenty years, by whom she was the mother of nine children, was shot on her leaving Covent Garden Theatre, by the Rev. James Hackman, who had the living of Wiverton in Norfolk; a young man not half her own age, and who appears to have imbibed a violent passion for Miss Reay, whom he first met at lord Sandwich's seat at Hinchinbroke, where he had been frequently invited to dine, while commanding a recruiting party at Huntingdon: he being, previously to his entering the church, a lieutenant in the 68th foot. Hackman, having shot Miss Reay, fired a pistol at himself, but being only wounded by it, was tried at the Old Bailey for murder, convicted and executed. [Ed.]

a wiser path to happiness by depending on yourself for amusement. Books and past ages draw one into no scrapes, and perhaps it is best not to know much of men till they are dead. I wish you health—you want nothing else.

Yours most truly.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, April 20, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I have received the plates very safely, but hope you nor the alderman will take it ill that I return them. They are extremely pretty and uncommonly well preserved—but I am sure they are not by Rubens, nor I believe after his designs, for I am persuaded they are older than his time. In truth, I have a great many of the same sort, and do not wish for more. I shall send them back on Thursday by the Fly, and will beg you to inquire after them; and I trust they will arrive as safely as they did to

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

April 23, 1779.

I OUGHT not to trouble you so often when you are not well; but that is the very cause of my writing now. You left off abruptly from disorder, and therefore I wish to know it is gone.

The plates I hope got home safe. They are pretty, especially the reverses; but the drawing in general is bad.

Pray tell me what you mean by a *priced* catalogue of the pictures at Houghton. Is it a printed one? if it is, where is it to be had?—odd questions from *me*, and which I should not wish to have mentioned as coming from me. I have been told to-day that they are actually sold to the Czarina—*sic transit!* mortifying enough, were not every thing transitory! we must recollect that our griefs and pains are so, as well as our joys and glories; and, by balancing the account, a grain of comfort

is to be extracted. Adieu ! I shall be heartily glad to receive a better account of you.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Arlington-street, May 21, 1779.

As Mr. Essex has told me that you still continue out of order, I am impatient to hear from yourself how you are. Do, send me a line : I hope it will be a satisfactory one.

Do you know that Dr. Ducarel has published a translation of a History of the Abbey of Bec !¹ There is a pretty print to it ; and one very curious circumstance, at least valuable to us disciples of *Alma Mater Etoniensis*. The ram-hunting was derived from the manor of Wrotham in Norfolk, which formerly belonged to Bec, and being forfeited, together with other alien priories, was bestowed by Henry VI. on our college. I do not repine at reading any book from which I can learn a single fact that I wish to know. For the lives of the abbots, they were, according to the author, all pinks of piety and holiness—but there are few other facts amusing, especially with regard to the customs of those savage times—especially that the empress Matilda was buried in a bull's hide, and afterwards had a tomb covered with silver. There is another new book called *Sketches from Nature*, in two volumes, by Mr. G. Keate, in which I found one fact, too, that, if authentic, is worth knowing. The work is an imitation of Sterne, and has a sort of merit, though nothing that arrives at originality.

For the foundation of the church of Reculver, he quotes a MS. said to be written by a Dominican friar of Canterbury, and preserved at Louvain. The story is metamorphosed into a novel, and has very little of an antique air ; but it affirms that the monkish author attests the beauty of Richard III. This is very absurd, if invention has nothing to do with the story : and therefore one should suppose it genuine. I have desired Dodsley to ask Mr. Keate, if there truly exist such a MS.—if there does—I own I wish he had printed it rather than his own

¹ The History of the Royal Abbey of Bec in Normandy, by Bourget. London, 1779. 8vo. [Ed.]

production; for I agree with Mr. Gray, "that any man living may make a book worth reading, if he will but set down with truth what he has seen or heard, no matter whether the book is well written or not." Let those who can't write, glean.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington-street, May 22, 1779.

IF you hear of us no oftener than we of you, you will be as much behind-hand in news as my Lady Lyttelton. We have seen a traveller that saw you in your island,¹ but it sounds like hearing of Ulysses.—Well! we must be content. You are not only not dethroned, but owe the safety of your dominions to your own skill in fortification. If we do not hear of your extending your conquests, why, is it not less than all our modern heroes have done, whom prophets have foretold and gazettes celebrated—or who have foretold and celebrated themselves. Pray be content to be cooped up in an island that has no neighbours, when the Howes and Clintons, and Dunmores and Burgoynes and Campbells, are not yet got beyond the great river—Inquiry!² To-day's papers say, that the *little* prince of Orange³ is to invade you again—but we trust Sir James Wallace has clipped his wings so close, that they will not grow again this season, though he is so ready to *fly*.

Nothing material has happened since I wrote last—so, as every moment of a civil war is precious, every one has been turned to the interest of diversion. There have been three masquerades, an installation,⁴ and the ball of the knights at the Haymarket this week; not to mention Almack's, Festino, Lady Spencer's, Ranelagh and Vauxhall, operas and plays. The duchess of Bolton, too,

¹ Mr. Conway was now at his government, Jersey. [Or.]

² The parliamentary inquiry which took place in the House of Commons on the conduct of the American war. [Or.]

³ The prince of Nassau, who had commanded the attack upon Jersey, claiming relationship to the great house of Nassau, Mr. Walpole calls the "*little prince of Orange*." [Or.]

⁴ An installation of Knights of the Bath took place on the 19th May, on which occasion the duke of York acted as grand master. [Ed.]

saw masks—so many, that the floor gave way, and the company in the dining-room were near falling on the heads of those in the parlour, and exhibiting all that has not yet appeared in Doctors' Commons. At the knights' ball was such a profusion of strawberries, that people could hardly get into the supper-room. I could tell you more, but I do not love to exaggerate.

Lady Ailesbury told me this morning that lord Bristol has got a calf with two feet to each leg—I am convinced it is by the duchess of Kingston,⁵ who has two of every thing where others have but one.

Adieu! I am going to sup with Mrs. Abington—and hope Mrs. Clive will not hear of it.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 2, 1779.

I AM sincerely rejoiced, dear sir, that you find yourself at all better, and trust it is an omen of further amendment. Mr. Essex surprised me by telling me, that you who keep yourself so warm and so numerously clothed, do yet sometimes, if the sun shines, sit and write in your garden for hours at a time. It is more than I should readily do, whose habitudes are so very different from yours. Your complaints seem to demand perspiration—but I do not venture to advise. I understand no constitution but my own, and should kill Milo, if I managed him as I treat myself. I sat in a window on Saturday, with the east wind blowing on my neck till near two in the morning—and it seems to have done me good, for I am better within these two days than I have been these six months. My spirits have been depressed, and my nerves so aspen, that the smallest noise disturbed me. To-day I do not feel a complaint; which is something at near sixty-two.

I don't know whether I have not misinformed you, nor am sure it was Dr. Ducarel who translated the account of the

⁵ “Do you know, my lord,” said the duchess of Kingston, then miss Chudleigh, to lord Chesterfield, “the world says I have had twins.” “Does it?” said his lordship; “I make a point of believing only one half of what it says.” [Ed.]

Abbey of Bec—he gave it to Mr. Lort; but I am not certain he ever published it. You was the first that notified to me the fifth volume of the *Archæologia*.—I am not much more edified than usual; but there are three pretty prints of Reginal Seals. Mr. Pegge's tedious dissertation, which he calls a brief one, about the foolish legend of St. George, is despicable: all his arguments are equally good for proving the existence of the dragon. What diversion might laughter make of the society! Dolly Pentraeth, the old woman of Mousehole, and Mr. Penneck's nurse, p. 81, would have furnished Foote with two personages for a farce. The same grave dissertation on patriarchal customs, seems to have as much to do with British antiquities, as the Lapland witches that sell wind—and what business has the society with Roman inscriptions in Dalmatia! I am most pleased with the account of Nonsuch, imperfect as it is—it appears to have been but a villa, and not considerable for a royal one. You see lilacs were then a novelty—well, I am glad they publish away. The vanity of figuring in these repositories will make many persons contribute their MSS. and every now and then something valuable will come to light, which its own intrinsic merit might not have saved.

I know nothing more of Houghton. I should certainly be glad to have the priced catalogue; and if you will lend me yours, my printer shall transcribe it—but I am in no hurry. I conceive faint hopes, as the sale is not concluded—however, I take care not to flatter myself.

I think I told you I had purchased, at Mr. Ives's sale, a handsome coat in painted glass, of Hobart impaling Boleyn—but I can find no such match in my pedigree—yet I have heard that Blickling belonged to Ann Boleyn's father. Pray reconcile all this to me.

Lord de Ferrers is to dine here on Saturday; and I have got to treat him with an account of ancient painting, formerly in the hall of Tamworth-castle; they are mentioned in Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, vol. i. p. 43.

Do not put yourself in pain to answer this—only be assured I shall be happy to know when you are able to write with ease. You must leave your cloister, if your transcribing leaves you.

TO THE REV. MR. LORT.

Strawberry-hill, June 4, 1779.

I AM sorry, dear sir, you could not let me have the pleasure of your company; but, I own, you have partly, not entirely, made me amends by the sight of your curious MS., which I return you, with your other book of inaugurations.

The sight of the MS. was particularly welcome to me, because the long visit of Henry VI. and his uncle Gloucester, to St. Edmund's Bury, accounts for those rare altar tablets that I bought at Mr. Ives's sale, on which are incontestably the portraits of duke Humphrey, cardinal Beaufort, and the same archbishop that is in my marriage of Henry VI. I know the house of Lancaster were patrons of St. Edmund's Bury; but so long a visit is demonstration.

The fourth person on my panels is unknown. Over his head is a coat of arms. It may be that of W. Curteys the abbot, or the alderman, as he is in scarlet. His figure and the duke's are far superior to the other two, and worthy of a good Italian master. The cardinal and the archbishop are in the dry hard manner of the age. I wish you would call and look at them; they are at Mr. Bonus's in Oxford-road; the two prelates are much damaged. I peremptorily enjoined Bonus to repair only, and not repaint them; and thus by putting him out of his way, I have put him so much out of humour, too, that he has kept them these two years, and not finished them yet. I design them for the four void spaces in my chapel, on the sides of the shrine. The duke of Gloucester's face is so like, though younger, that it proves I guessed right at his figure in my marriage. The tables came out of the abbey of Bury, were procured by old Peter Le Neve, norroy, and came by his widow's marriage to Tom Martin, at whose sale M. Ives bought them. We have very few princely portraits so ancient, so authentic, and none so well painted as the duke and fourth person. These were the insides of the doors which I had split into two, and value them extremely. This account I think will be more satisfactory to you than notes.

Pray tell me how you like the pictures when you have

examined them. I shall search in Edmondson's new Vocabulary of Arms for the coat, which contains three bull's heads on six pieces; but the colours are either white and black, or the latter is become so by time. I hope you are not going out of town yet; I shall probably be there some day in next week.

I see advertized a book something in the way of your inaugurations, called *Le Costume*; do you know any thing of it? Can you tell me who is the author of the Second Anticipation on the Exhibition? Is not it Barry the painter?

Your much obliged.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Saturday, June 5, 1779.

I WRITE to you more seldom than I am disposed to do, from having nothing positive to tell you, and from being unwilling to say and unsay every minute something that is reported positively. The confident assertions of the victory over D'Estaing are totally vanished—and they who invented them, now declaim as bitterly against Byron, as if he had deceived them—and as they did against Keppel. This day se'nnight there was a great alarm about Ireland—which was far from being all invention, though not an absolute insurrection, as was said. The case, I believe, was this: The court, in order to break the volunteer army established by the Irish themselves, endeavoured to persuade a body in lady Blayney's county of Monaghan to enlist in the militia—which they took indignantly. They said, they had great regard for lady Blayney and lord Clermont; but to act under them, would be acting under the king, and that was by no means their intention. There have since been motions for inquiries what steps the ministers have taken to satisfy the Irish—and these they have imprudently rejected—which will not tend to pacification. The ministers have been pushed, too, on the article of Spain, and could not deny that all negotiation is at an end—though they will not own farther. However, the Spanish ambassador is much out of humour. From Paris they write confidently of the approach-

ing declaration;¹ and lord Sandwich, I hear, has said in a very mixed company, that it was folly not to expect it. There is another million asked, and given on a vote of credit; and lord North has boasted of such mines for next year, that one would think he believed next year would never come.

The inquiry² goes on, and lord Harrington did himself and Burgoyne honour. Barré and governor Johnstone³ have had warm words, and Burke has been as frantic for the Roman Catholics as lord George Gordon against them. The parliament, it is said, is to rise on the 21st.

You will not collect from all this that our prospect clears up. I fear there is not more discretion in the treatment of Ireland than of America. The court seems to be infatuated, and to think that nothing is of any consequence but a majority in parliament—though they have totally lost all power but that of provoking. Fortunate it had been for the king and kingdom, had the court had no majority for these six years! America had still been ours!—and all the lives and all the millions we have squandered! A majority that has lost thirteen provinces by bullying and vapouring, and the most childish menaces, will be a brave countermatch for France and Spain, and a rebellion in Ireland! In short, it is plain that there is nothing a majority in parliament can do, but outvote a minority; and yet by their own accounts one would think they could not do even that. I saw a paper t'other day that began with this Irisicism, “As the minority have lost us thirteen provinces,” &c. I know nothing the minority have done, or been suffered to do, but restore the Roman Catholic religion—and that, too, was by the desire of the court.

¹ Spain had, on the breaking out of the war between this country and America, offered to mediate between them, but receiving a refusal, she at once declared herself a principal in the war, and ready to fulfil the family compact. [Ed.]

² Into the conduct of the American war. [Or.]

³ George Johnstone, esq. This gentleman, during his residence in the colonies, having formed many connexions there, endeavoured, when the Congress declined to treat with the English commissioners unless the independence of the colonies was first recognized, to open a correspondence with some private friends who were members of Congress, with a view to bribing them to promote the negociation; which being discovered by the Congress, they passed a resolution declaring it incompatible with their dignity to hold any communication with him. [Ed.]

This is, however, the present style. They announced with infinite applause a new production of Tickell:—it has appeared, and is a most paltry performance. It is called the Cassette verte of M. de Sartine, and pretends to be his correspondence with the opposition. Nay, they are so pitifully mean as to laugh at Dr. Franklin, who has such thorough reason to sit and laugh at them. What triumph it must be to him to see a miserable pamphlet all the revenge they can take! There is another, still duller, called Opposition Mornings, in which you are lugged in. In truth, it is a compliment to any man to except him out of the number of those that have contributed to the shocking disgraces inflicted on this undone country! When lord Chat-ham was minister, he never replied to abuse but by a victory.

I know no private news: I have been here ever since Tuesday, enjoying my tranquillity, as much as an honest man can do who sees his country ruined. It is just such a period as makes philosophy wisdom. There are great moments when every man is called upon to exert himself—but when folly, infatuation, delusion, incapacity, and profligacy fling a nation away, and it concurs itself, and applauds its destroyers, a man who has lent no hand to the mischief, and can neither prevent nor remedy the mass of evils, is fully justified in sitting aloof and beholding the tempest rage, with silent scorn and indignant compassion. Nay, I have, I own, some comfortable reflections. I rejoice that there is still a great continent of Englishmen who will remain free and independent, and who laugh at the impotent majorities of a prostitute parliament. I care not whether general Burgoyne and governor Johnstone cross over and figure in, and support or oppose; nor whether Mr. Burke, or the superior of the Jesuits, is high commissioner to the kirk of Scotland. My ideas are such as I have always had, and are too plain and simple to comprehend modern confusions; and, therefore, they suit with those of few men. What will be the issue of this chaos, I know not, and, probably, shall not see. I do see with satisfaction, *that what was meditated* has failed by the grossest folly; and when one has escaped the worst, lesser evils must be endured with patience.

After this dull effusion, I will divert you with a story that made me laugh this morning till I cried. You know my Swiss David, and his incomprehensible pronunciation. He came to

me, and said, "Auh! dar is Meses * * * * wants some of your large flags to put in her great O." With much ado I found out that Mrs. * * * * had sent for leave to take up some flags out of my meadow for her grotto.

I hope in a few days to see lady Ailesbury and miss J * * * * here; I have writ to propose it.—What are your intentions? Do you stay till you have made your island impregnable? I doubt it will be our only one that will be so.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

Strawberry-hill, Tuesday night, June 8, 1779.

You frightened me for a minute, my dear madam; but every letter since has given me pleasure, by telling me how rapidly you recovered, and how perfectly well you are again. Pray, however, do not give me any more such joys. I shall be quite content with your remaining immortal, without the foil of any alarm. You gave all your friends a panic, and may trust their attachment without renewing it. I received as many inquiries the next day as if an archbishop was in danger, and all the bench hoped he was going to heaven.

Mr. Conway wonders I do not talk of Voltaire's Memoirs.—Lord bless me! I saw it two months ago: the Lucans brought it from Paris and lent it to me: nay, and I have seen most of it before; and I believe this an imperfect copy, for it ends no how at all. Besides, it was quite out of my head. Lord Melcombe's Diary put that and every thing else out of my mind. I wonder much more at Mr. Conway's not talking of this! It gossips about the living as familiarly as a modern newspaper. I long to hear what * * * * says about it. I wish the newspapers were as accurate! They have been circumstantial about *lady Walsingham's* birth-day clothes, which to be sure one is glad to know, only unluckily there is no such person.¹ However, I dare to say that her dress was very becoming, and that she looked charmingly.

¹ The title of Walsingham was not revived in the family of de Grey till the year 1780. [Or.]

The month of June, according to custom immemorial, is as cold as Christmas. I had a fire last night, and all my rosebuds, I believe, would have been very glad to sit by it. I have other grievances to boot; but as they are annuals too, *videlicet*,—people to see my house,—I will not torment your ladyship with them: yet I know nothing else. None of my neighbours are come into the country yet: one would think all the dowagers were elected into the new parliament. Adien, my dear madam!

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 16, 1779.

YOUR countess was here last Thursday, and received a letter from you, that told us how slowly you received ours. When you will receive this I cannot guess; but it dates a new era, which you with reason did not care to look at as possible. In a word, behold a Spanish war! I must detail a little to increase your wonder. I heard here the day before yesterday that it was likely; and that night received a letter from Paris, telling me (it was of the 6th) that monsieur de Beauveau was going, they knew not whither, at the head of 26,000 men, with three lieutenant-generals and six or eight marechaux de camp under him. Yesterday I went to town, and T. W. happened to call on me.—He, who used to be informed early, did not believe a word either of a Spanish war or a French expedition. I saw some other persons in the evening as ignorant. At night, I went to sup at Richmond-house. The duke said the Brest fleet was certainly sailed, and had got the start of ours by twelve days; that monsieur de Beauveau was on board with a large sum of money, and with white and *red* cockades; and that there would certainly be a Spanish war. He added, that the opposition were then pressing in the House of Commons to have the parliament continue sitting, and urging to know if we were not at the eve of a Spanish war; but the ministers persisted in the prorogation for to-morrow or Friday, and would no answer on Spain.

I said I would make you wonder — But no—Why should the parliament continue to sit? Are not the ministers and the

parliament the same thing? And how has either house shown that it has any talent for war?

The duke of Richmond does not guess whither the Brest fleet is gone.—He thinks, if to Ireland, we should have known it by this time. He has heard that the prince of Beauveau has said he was going on an expedition that would be glorious in the eyes of posterity.—I asked, if that might not mean Gibraltar? The duke doubts, but hopes it, as he thinks it no wise measure on their side; yet he was very melancholy, as you will be, on this heavy accession to our distresses.

Well here we are, *aris et focis*, and all at stake! What can we be meaning? Unable to conquer America before she was assisted—scarce able to keep France at bay—are we a match for both, and Spain, too?—What can be our view? nay, what can be our expectation? I sometimes think we reckon it will be more creditable to be forced by France and Spain to give up America, than to have the merit, with the latter, of doing it with grace.—But, as Cato says,

I am weary of conjectures—This must end them;

that is, the sword:—and never, I believe, did a country plunge itself into such difficulties step by step, and for six years together, without once recollecting that each foreign war rendered the object of the civil war more unattainable; and that in both the foreign wars we have not an object in prospect. Unable to recruit our remnant of an army in America, are we to make conquests on France and Spain? They may choose their attacks: we can scarce choose what we will defend.

Ireland, they say, is more temperate than was expected. That is some consolation—yet many fear the Irish will be tempted to unite with America, which would throw all that trade into their convenient harbours: and I own I have apprehensions that the parliament's rising without taking a step in their favour, may offend them.¹ Surely at least we have courageous ministers. I thought my father a stout man:—he had not a tithe of their spirit.

¹ The alarm of an invasion of Ireland induced the administration to allow the Irish to arm themselves, and twenty thousand volunteers were soon raised. This measure was speedily followed by another equally important; bills were brought into parliament, which afforded such an extension to the commerce of Ireland as satisfied the demands of that country. [Ed.]

The town has wound up the season perfectly in character by a fête at the Pantheon by subscription. Le Texier managed it; but it turned out sadly. The company was first shut into the galleries to look down on the supper, then let to descend to it. Afterwards they were led into the subterraneous apartment, which was laid with mould, and planted with trees, and crammed with nosegays: but the fresh earth, and the dead leaves, and the effluvia of breaths, made such a stench and moisture, that they were suffocated; and when they remounted, the legs and wings of chickens and remnants of ham (for the supper was not removed) poisoned them more. A druid in an arbour distributed verses to the ladies; then the Baccelli and the dancers of the opera danced; and then danced the company; and then, it being morning, and the candles burnt out, the windows were opened; and then the stewed danced assembly were such shocking figures, that they fled like ghosts, as they looked. — I suppose there will be no more balls unless the French land, and then we shall show we do not mind it.

Thus I have told you all I know. You will ponder over these things in your little distant island, when we have forgotten them. There is another person, one Dr. Franklin, who, I fancy, is not sorry that we divert ourselves so well.

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.¹

Strawberry-hill, July 4, 1779.

I HAVE NOW received the drawings of Grignan, and know not how to express my satisfaction and gratitude but by a silly witticism that is like the studied quaintness of the last age. In short, they are so much more beautiful than I expected, that I am *not* surprised at *your* having surprised me by exceeding even what I expected from your well-known kindness to me; they are charmingly executed, and with great taste. I own,

¹ His majesty's justice for the counties of Glamorgan, Brecknock, and Radnor. [Or.] The works of this clever and eccentric scholar were collected and published in three volumes, in 1818. He was son of Nicholas Hardinge, esq., formerly one of the joint-secretaries of the Treasury, and, consequently, uncle to the gallant sir Henry Hardinge. [Ed.]

too, that Grignan is grander, and in a much finer situation, than I had imagined, as I concluded that the witchery of Madame de Sévigné's ideas and style had spread the same leaf-gold over *places* with which she gilded her *friends*. All that has appeared of *them* since the publication of her letters has lowered them. A single letter of her daughter, that to Paulina, with a description of the duchess of Bourbon's toilette, is worthy of the mother. Paulina's own letters contain not a little worth reading; one just divines that she might have written well if she had had any thing to write about (which, however, would not have signified to her grandmother). Coulanges was a silly good-humoured glutton that flattered a rich widow for her dinners. His wife was sensible, but dry, and rather peevish at growing old. Unluckily nothing more has come to light of madame de Sévigné's son, whose short letters in the collection I am almost *profane* enough to prefer to his mother's; and which makes me astonished that she did not love his wit, so unaffected, and so congenial to her own, in preference to the eccentric and sophisticated reveries of her sublime and ill-humoured daughter. Grignan alone maintains its dignity, and shall be consecrated here among other monuments of that bewitching period, and amongst which one loves to lose oneself, and drink oblivion of an era so very unlike; for the awkward bigots to despotism of our time have not madame de Sévigné's address, nor can paint an Indian idol with an hundred hands as graceful as the Apollo of the Belvidere. When will you come and accept my thanks? will Wednesday next suit you? But do you know that I must ask you not to leave your gown behind you, which, indeed, I never knew you put on willingly, but to come in it. I shall want your protection at Westminster Hall.

Yours most cordially.

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

Saturday night, July 10, 1779.

I COULD not thank your ladyship before the post went out to-day, as I was getting into my chaise to go and dine at Carshalton with my cousin T. Walpole when I received your kind

inquiry about my eye. It is quite well again, and I hope the next attack of the gout will be any where rather than in that quarter.

I did not expect Mr. Conway would think of returning just now. As you have lost both Mrs. Damer and lady William Campbell, I do not see why your ladyship should not go to Goodwood.

The Baroness's increasing peevishness does not surprise me. When people will not weed their own minds, they are apt to be overrun with nettles. She knows nothing of politics, and no wonder talks nonsense about them. It is silly to wish three nations had but one neck; but it is ten times more absurd to act as if it was so, which the government has done;—aye, and forgetting, too, that it has not a scymitar large enough to sever that neck, which they have in effect made *one*. It is past the time, madame, of making conjectures. How can one guess whither France and Spain will direct a blow that is in their option? I am rather inclined to think that they will have patience to ruin us in detail. Hitherto France and America have carried their points by that manœuvre. Should there be an engagement at sea, and the French and Spanish fleets, by their great superiority, should have the advantage, one knows not what might happen. Yet, though there are such large preparations making on the French coast, I do not much expect a serious invasion, as they are sure they can do us more damage by a variety of other attacks, where we can make little resistance. Gibraltar and Jamaica can but be the immediate objects of Spain. Ireland is much worse guarded than this island:—nay, we must be undone by our expense, should the summer pass without any attempt. My cousin thinks they will try to destroy Portsmouth and Plymouth—but I have seen nothing in the present French ministry that looks like bold enterprize. We are much more adventurous, that set every thing to the hazard: but there are such numbers of *baronesses* that both talk and act with passion, that one would think the nation had lost its senses. Every thing has miscarried that has been undertaken, and the worse we succeed, the more is risked;—yet the nation is not angry! How can one conjecture during such a delirium? I sometimes almost think I must be in the wrong to be of so contrary an opinion to most men—yet, when every misfortune that

has happened had been foretold by a few, why should I not think I have been in the right? Has not almost every single event that has been announced as prosperous proved a gross falsehood, and often a silly one? Are we not at this moment assured that Washington cannot possibly amass an army of above 8,000 men! and yet Clinton, with 20,000 men, and with the hearts, as we are told, too, of three parts of the colonies, dares not show his teeth without the walls of New York! Can I be in the wrong in not believing what is so contradictory to my senses? We could not conquer America when it stood alone; then France supported it, and we did not mend the matter. To make it still easier, we have driven Spain into the alliance. Is this wisdom? Would it be presumption, even if one were single, to think that we must have the worst in such a contest? Shall I be like the mob, and expect to conquer France and Spain, and then thunder upon America?—Nay, but the higher mob do not expect such success. They would not be so angry at the house of Bourbon, if not mortally certain that those kings destroy all our passionate desire and expectation of conquering America. We bullied, and threatened, and begged, and nothing would do. Yet independence was still the word. Now we rail at the two monarchs—and when they have banged us, we shall sue to them as humbly as we did to the Congress. All this my senses, such as they are, tell me has been and will be the case. What is worse, all Europe is of the same opinion; and though forty thousand *baronesses* may be ever so angry, I venture to prophesy that we shall make but a very foolish figure whenever we are so lucky as to obtain a peace; and posterity, that may have prejudices of its own, will still take the liberty to pronounce that its ancestors were a woful set of politicians from the year 1774 to—I wish I knew when.

If I might advise, I would recommend Mr. B*** to command the fleet in room of sir Charles Hardy. The fortune of the B***s is powerful enough to baffle calculation. Good night, madam!

P.S. I have not written to Mr. Conway since this day seven-night, not having a teaspoonful of news to send him. I will beg your ladyship to tell him so.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 12, 1779.

I AM concerned, dear sir, that you gave yourself the trouble of transcribing the catalogue and prices, which I received last night, and for which I am exceedingly obliged to you. Partial as I am to the pictures at Houghton, I confess I think them much overvalued. My father's whole collection, of which alone he had preserved the prices, cost but 40,000*l.*; and after his death there were three sales of pictures, among which were all the whole-lengths of Vandyke but three, which had been sent to Houghton, but not fitting any of the spaces left, came back to town. Few of the rest sold were very fine, but no doubt sir Robert had paid as dear for many of them; as purchasers are not perfect connoisseurs at first.

Many of the valuations are not only exorbitant, but injudicious. They who made the estimate seem to have considered the rarity of the hands more than the excellence. Three, the magic offering, by Carlo Maratti, as it is called, and two, supposed Paul Veronese, are very indifferent copies, and yet all are roundly valued, and the first ridiculously. I do not doubt of another picture in the collection but the Last Supper, by Raphael, and yet this is set down at 500*l.* I miss three pictures, at least they are not set down, the sir Thomas Warton, and Laud and Gibbons. The first is most capital; yes, I recollect I have had some doubts on the Laud, though the University of Oxford once offered 400*l.* for it—and if queen Henrietta is by Vandyke, it is a very indifferent one. The affixing a higher value to the Pietro Cortona than to the octagon Guido is most absurd—I have often gazed on the latter, and preferred it even to the doctor's. In short, the appraisers were determined to see what the Czarina *could* give, rather than what the pictures were really worth—I am glad she seemes to think so, for I hear no more of the sale—it is not very wise in me, still to concern myself at my age, about what I have so little interest in—it is still less wise to be anxious on trifles, when one's country is sinking. I do not know which is most mad, my nephew or our ministers—both the one and the other increase my veneration for the founder of Houghton.

I will not rob you of the prints you mention, dear sir ; one of them at least I know Mr. Pennant gave me. I do not admire him for his punctiliousness with you. Pray tell me the name of your glass-painter ; I do not think I shall want him, but it is not impossible. Mr. Essex agreed with me—that Jarvis's windows for Oxford after sir Joshua Reynolds, will not succeed. Most of his colours are opaque, and their great beauty depending on a spot of light for sun or moon, is an imposition. When his paintings are exhibited at Charing-cross, all the rest of the room is darkened to relieve them. That cannot be done at New College ; or if done, the chapel would be too dark. If there are other lights, the effect will be lost.

This sultry weather will, I hope, quite restore you ; people need not go to Lisbon and Naples, if we continue to have such summers.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 12, 1779.

I WRITE from decency, dear sir, not from having any thing particular to say, but to thank you for your offer of letting me see the arms of painted glass, which, however, I will decline, lest it should be broken ; and as at present I have no occasion to employ the painter. If I build my offices, perhaps, I may have ; but I have dropped that thought for this year. The disastrous times do not inspire expense. Our alarms, I conclude, do not ruffle your hermitage. We are returning to our state of islandhood, and shall have little, I believe, to boast but of what we have been.

I see a History of Alien Priors¹ announced ; do you know any thing of it, or of the author ?

I am, ever yours most sincerely.

¹ This was Gough's well-known work, "Some Account of the Alien Priors, and of such Lands as they are known to have possessed in England and Wales." London, 1779 ; 8vo. ; two volumes. [Ed.]

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY.

Strawberry-hill, Friday night, 1779.

I AM not at all surprised, my dear madam, at the intrepidity of Mrs. Damer;¹ she always was the heroic daughter of a hero. Her sense and coolness never forsake her. I, who am not so firm, shuddered at your ladyship's account. Now that she has stood fire for four hours, I hope she will give as clear proofs of her understanding, of which I have as high opinion as of her courage, and not return in any danger.

I am to dine at Ditton to-morrow, and will certainly talk on the subject you recommend—yet I am far, till I have heard more, from thinking with your ladyship, that more troops and artillery at Jersey would be desirable. Any considerable quantity of either, especially of the former, cannot be spared at this moment, when so big a cloud hangs over this island, nor would any number avail if the French should be masters at sea. A large garrison would but tempt the French thither, were it but to distress this country; and, what is worse, would encourage Mr. Conway to make an impracticable defence. If he is to remain in a situation so unworthy of him, I confess I had rather he was totally incapable of making any defence. I love him enough not to murmur at his exposing himself where his country and his honour demand him—but I would not have him measure himself in a place untenable against very superior force. My present comfort is, as to him, that France at this moment has a far vaster object. I have good reason to believe the government knows that a great army is ready to embark at St. Maloes, but will not stir till after a sea-fight, which we do not know but may be engaged at this moment. Our fleet is allowed to be the finest ever set forth by this country—but it is inferior in number by seventeen ships to the united squadron of the Bourbons. France, if successful, means to pour in a vast many thousands on us, and has threatened to burn the capital itself. Jersey, my dear madam, does not enter into a calculation of such magnitude. The moment is singularly awful—yet the vaunts of enemies are

¹ The packet in which she was crossing from Dover to Ostend was taken by a French frigate, after a running fight of several hours. [Or.]

rarely executed successfully and ably. Have we trampled America under our foot?

You have too good sense, madam, to be imposed upon by my arguments, if they are insubstantial. You do know that I have had my terrors for Mr. Conway ; but at present they are out of the question, from the insignificance of his island. Do not listen to rumours, nor believe a single one till it has been canvassed over and over. Fear, folly, fifty motives, will coin new reports every hour at such a conjuncture. When one is totally void of credit and power, patience is the only wisdom. I have seen dangers still more imminent. They were dispersed. Nothing happens in proportion to what is meditated. Fortune, whatever fortune is, is more constant than is the common notion. I do not give this as one of my solid arguments, but I have always encouraged myself in being superstitious on the favourable side. I never, like most superstitious people, believe auguries against my wishes. We have been fortunate in the escape of Mrs. Damer, and in the defeat at Jersey, even before Mr. Conway arrived ; and thence I depend on the same future prosperity. From the authority of persons who do not reason on such airy hopes, I am seriously persuaded, that if the fleets engage, the enemy will not gain advantage without deep-felt loss, enough probably to dismay their invasion. Coolness may succeed, and then negociation. Surely, if we can weather the summer, we shall, obstinate as we are against conviction, be compelled by the want of money to relinquish our ridiculous pretensions, now proved to be utterly impracticable ; for, with an inferior navy at home, can we assert sovereignty over America ? It is a contradiction in terms and in fact. It may be hard of digestion to relinquish it, but it is impossible to pursue it. Adieu, my dear madam ! I have not left room for a line more.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 13, 1779.

I AM writing to you at random: not knowing whether or when this letter will go: but your brother told me last night that an officer, whose name I have forgot, was arrived from

Jersey, and would return to you soon. I am sensible how very seldom I have written to you—but you have been few moments out of my thoughts. What *they* have been, you who know me so minutely may well guess, and why they do not pass my lips. Sense, experience, circumstances, can teach one to command one's self outwardly, but do not divest a most friendly heart of its feelings. I believe the state of my mind has contributed to bring on a very weak and decaying body my present disorders. I have not been well the whole summer; but for these three weeks much otherwise. It has at last ended in the gout, which, to all appearance, will be a short fit.

On public affairs I cannot speak. Every thing is so exaggerated on all sides, that what grains of truth remain in the sieve would appear cold and insipid; and the great manœuvres you learn as soon as I. In the naval battle between Byron and d'Estaing, our captains were worthy of any age in our story.

You may imagine how happy I am at Mrs. Damer's return, and at her not being at Naples, as she was likely to have been, at the dreadful explosion of Vesuvius.¹ Surely it will have glutted sir William's rage for volcanoes! How poor lady Hamilton's nerves stood it I do not conceive.—Oh, mankind! mankind!—Are there not calamities enough in store for us, but must destruction be our amusement and pursuit?

I send this to Ditton,² where it may wait some days; but I would not suffer a sure opportunity to slip without a line. You are more obliged to me for all I do not say, than for whatever eloquence itself could pen.

P.S. I unseal my letter to add, that undoubtedly you will come to the meeting of parliament, which will be in October. Nothing can, or ever did, make me advise you to take a step unworthy of yourself. But surely you have higher and more sacred duties than the government of a mole-hill!

¹ On the 10th August 1779, when the eruption was so great that several villages were destroyed: a hunting seat belonging to the king of Naples, called Caccia Bella, shared the same fate. [Ed.]

² Where lord Hertford had then a villa. [Or.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 16, 1779.

YOU ought not to accuse yourself only, when I have been as silent as you. Surely we have been friends too long to admit ceremony as a go-between. I have thought of writing to you several times, but found I had nothing worth telling you. I am rejoiced to hear your health has been better: mine has been worse the whole summer and autumn than ever it was without any positive distemper, and thence I conclude it is a failure in my constitution—of which, being a thing of course, we will say no more. Nobody but a physician is bound to hear what he cannot cure—and if we will pay for what we cannot expect, it is our own fault.

I have seen doctor Lort, who seems pleased with becoming a limb of Canterbury. I heartily wish the mitre may not devolve before it has been substantially on him. In the mean time he will be delighted with ransacking the library at Lambeth; and, to do him justice, his ardour is literary, not interested.

I am much obliged to you, dear sir, for taking the trouble of transcribing Mr. Tyson's Journal, which is entertaining. But I am so ignorant as not to know where Hatfield priory is. The three heads I remember on the gate at Whitehall; there were five more. The whole demolished structure was transported to the great park at Windsor by the late duke of Cumberland, who intended to re-edify it, but never did; and now I suppose

Its ruins ruined, as its place no more.

I did not know what was become of the heads, and am glad any are preserved. I should doubt their being the works of Torregiano. Pray who is Mr. Nichols, who has published the *Alien Priories*; there are half-a-dozen or more pretty views of French cathedrals. I cannot say that I have found any thing else in the book that amused me—but as you deal more in ancient lore than I do, perhaps you might be better pleased.

I am told there is a new *History of Gloucestershire*, very large, but ill executed, by one Reedhall—still I have sent for it, for Gloucestershire is a very historic country.

It was a wrong scent on which I employed you. The arms I have impaled were certainly not Boleyn's. You lament removal of friends—alas! dear sir, when one lives to our age, one feels that in a higher degree than from their change of place! but one must not dilate those common moralities. You see by my date I have changed place myself. I am got into an excellent, comfortable, cheerful house; and as, from necessity and inclination, I live much more at home than I used to do, it is very agreeable to be so pleasantly lodged, and to be in a warm inn as one passes through the last vale. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 27, 1779.

I HAVE two good reasons against writing, nothing to say, and a lame muffled hand; and therefore I choose to write to you, for it shows remembrance. For these six weeks, almost, I have been a prisoner with the gout, but begin to creep about my room. How have you borne the late deluge and the present frost? How do you like an earl bishop?¹ Had not we one before in ancient days? I have not a book in town, but was not there an Anthony Beck, or a Hubert de Burgh, that was bishop of Durham and earl of Kent, or have I confounded them?

Have you seen Rudder's new History of Gloucestershire?² His additions to sir Robert Atkyns, make it the most sensible history of a county that we have had yet, for his descriptions of the site, soil, products, and prospects of each parish are extremely good and picturesque; and he treats fanciful prejudices, and Saxon etymologies, when unfounded, and traditions, with due contempt.

I will not spin this note any further, but shall be glad of a line to tell me you are well. I have not seen Mr. Lort since he roosted under the metropolitan wings of his grace of Lambeth.

Yours ever.

¹ The hon. Frederick Augustus Hervey, bishop of Derry, had succeeded, on the 22d December 1779, to the earldom of Bristol, as fourth earl, by the death of his brother. [Ed.]

² By Samuel Rudder, who afterwards published a History of the Town of Gloucester, as well as one of Cirencester. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 5, 1780.

WHEN you said that you feared that your particular account of your very providential escape would deter me from writing to you again, I am sure, dear sir, that you spoke only from modesty, and not from thinking me capable of being so criminally indifferent to any thing, much less under such danger as you have run, that regards so old a friend, and one to whom I owe so many obligations. I am but too apt to write letters on trifling or no occasions; and should certainly have told you the interest I take in your accident, and how happy I am that it had no consequences of any sort. It is hard that temperance itself, which you are, should be punished for a good-natured transgression of your own rules, and where the excess was only staying out beyond your usual hour. I am heartily glad you did not jump out of your chaise; it has often been a much worse precaution than any consequences from risking to remain in it; as you are lame, too, it might have been very fatal. Thank God! all ended so well. Mr. Masters seems to have been more frightened, with not greater reason. What an absurd man to be impatient to notify a disagreeable event to you, and in so boisterous a manner, and which he could not know was true, since it was not!

I shall take extremely kind your sending me your picture in glass. I have carefully preserved the slight outline of yourself in a gown and night-cap, which you once was so good as to give me, because there was some likeness to your features, though it is too old even now. For a portrait of me in return, you might have it by sending the painter to the anatomical school, and bidding him draw the first skeleton he sees. I should expect any limner would laugh in my face if I offered it to him to be copied.

I thought I had confounded the ancient count bishops, as I had, and you have set me right. The new temporal ecclesiastical peer's estate is more than twelve thousand a-year, though I can scarce believe it is eighteen, as the last lord said.

The picture found near the altar in Westminster Abbey, about

three years ago, was of king Sebert ; I saw it, and it was well preserved, with some others worse—but they have foolishly buried it again behind their new altar-piece ; and so they have a very fine tomb of Ann of Cleve, close to the altar, which they did not know till I told them whose it was, though her arms are upon it, and though there is an exact plate of it in Sandford. They might at least have cut out the portraits and removed the tomb to a conspicuous situation—but though this age is grown so antiquarian, it has not gained a grain more of sense in that walk—witness, as you instance in Mr. Grose's *Legends*, and in the dean and chapter re-burying the crown, robes, and sceptre of Edward I.: there would surely have been as much piety in preserving them in their treasury, as in consigning them to decay. I did not know that the salvation of robes and crowns depended on receiving Christian burial. At the same time the chapter transgress that prince's will, like all their antecessors, for he ordered his tomb to be opened every year or two years, and receive a new sere cloth or paul—but they boast now of having enclosed him so substantially, that his ashes cannot be violated again.

It was the present bishop Dean that showed me the pictures and Ann's tomb, and consulted me on the new altar-piece. I advised him to have a light octangular canopy, like the cross at Chichester, placed over the table or altar itself, which would have given dignity to it, especially if elevated by a flight of steps ; and from the side arches of the octagon, I would have had a semicircle of open arches that should have advanced quite to the seats of the prebends, which would have discovered the pictures ; and through the octagon itself you would have perceived the shrine of Edward the Confessor, which is much higher than the level of the choir—but men who ask advice seldom follow it, if you do not happen to light on the same ideas with themselves.

Yours most sincerely.

P.S. The Houghton pictures are not lost—but to Houghton and England !¹

¹ They had been sold to the empress of Russia on the 10th September preceding this letter, and immediately transferred to that country. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 5, 1780.

I HAVE been turning over the new second volume of the *Biographia*, and find the additions very poor and lean performances.

The lives entirely new are partial and flattering, being contributions of the friends of those whose lives are recorded. This publication, made at a time when I have lived to see several of my contemporaries deposited in this national temple of fame, has made me smile, and reflect that many preceding authors, who have been installed there with much respect, may have been as trifling personages as those we have known, and now behold consecrated to memory. Three or four have struck me particularly, as Dr. Birch,¹ who was a worthy, good-natured soul, full of industry and activity, and running about like a young setting dog in quest of any thing, new or old, and with no parts, taste, or judgment. Then there is Dr. Blackwell,² the most impertinent literary coxcomb upon earth—but the editor has been so just as to insert a very merited satire on his Court of Augustus.

The third is Dr. Brown,³ that mountebank, who for a little time made as much noise by his *Estimate*, as ever quack did by his nostrum. I do not know if I ever told you how much I was struck the only time I ever saw him. You know one object, and the anathemas of his *Estimate* was the Italian Opera—yet

¹ Dr. Thomas Birch, the author of numerous historical and biographical works, and a very principal contributor to the "*General Dictionary, Historical and Critical*," published in ten volumes, folio, between 1734 and 1741. Dr. Birch's death, which was occasioned by a fall from his horse, happened 9th January 1766. [Ed.]

² Dr. Thomas Blackwell, principal of the Marischal College in Aberdeen. He wrote, besides the work mentioned by Walpole, "*An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*," and "*Letters concerning Mythology*." He died March 1st 1757. [Ed.]

³ Dr. John Brown, author of "*Essays on Shaftesbury's Characteristics*," a very popular book in its day, but the popularity of which was far exceeded by his "*Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*," a work which excited so much attention at the time of its appearance (1757), that seven editions of it were called for in little more than a year. [Ed.]

did I find him one evening, in Passion week, accompanying some of the Italian singers, at a concert at lady Carlisle's. A clergyman, no doubt, is not obliged to be on his knees the whole week before Easter, and music and a concert are harmless amusements; but when Cato or Calvin are out of character, reformation becomes ridiculous—but poor Dr. Brown was mad,⁴ and, therefore, might be in earnest, whether he played the fool or the reformer.

You recollect, perhaps, the threat of Dr. Kippis to me, which is to be executed on my father, for my calling the first edition of the *Biographia the Vindictio Britannica*—but observe how truth emerges at last! In his new volume he confesses that the article of lord Arlington, which I had specified as one of the most censurable, is the one most deserving that censure, and that the character of lord Arlington is *palliated beyond all truth and reason*—words stronger than mine—yet mine deserved to draw vengeance on my father! so a Presbyterian divine inverts divine judgment, and visits the sins of the children on the parents!

Cardinal Beaton's character, softened in the first edition, gentle Dr. Kippis pronounces *extremely detestable*—yet was I to blame for hinting such defects in that work!—and yet my words are quoted to show that lord Orrery's poetry was ridiculously bad. In like manner, Mr. Cumberland, who assumes the whole honour of publishing his grandfather's *Lucan*, and does not deign to mention its being published at Strawberry-hill, (though by the way I believe it will be oftener purchased for having been printed there, than for wearing Mr. Cumberland's name to the dedication), and yet he quotes me for having praised his ancestor in one of my publications. These little instances of pride and spleen divert me—and then make me reflect sadly on human weakness. I am very apt myself to like what flatters my opinions or passions, and to reject scornfully what thwarts them, even in the same persons. The more one lives, the more one discovers one's uglinesses in the features of others!

Adieu! dear sir—I hope you do not suffer by this severe season.

Yours ever.

⁴ He destroyed himself in a fit of insanity, 23d September 1766. [Ed.]

P.S. I remember two other instances, where my impartiality, or at least my sincerity, have exposed me to double censure.

You perhaps condemned my severity on Charles I., yet the late Mr. Hollis wrote against me in the newspapers, for condemning the republicans for their destruction of ancient monuments. Some blamed me for undervaluing the Flemish and Dutch pictures in my preface to the *Odes Walpolianæ*.

Barry, the painter, because I laughed at his extravagances, says, in his rejection of that school, “But I leave them to be admired by the Hon. H * * * W * * *, and such judges.”—Would not one think I had been their champion!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 27, 1780.

UNAPT as you are to inquire after news, dear sir, you wish to have admiral Rodney's victory confirmed.¹ I can now assure you, that he has had a considerable advantage, and took at least four Spanish men-of-war, and an admiral, who they say is since dead of his wounds.—We must be glad of these deplorable successes—but I heartily wish we had no longer occasion to hope for the destruction of any of our species—but, alas! it looks as if devastation would still open new fields of blood! The prospect darkens even at home—but, however you and I may differ in our political principles, it would be happy if every body would pursue theirs with as little rancour. How seldom does it happen in political contests, that any side can count any thing but its wounds! your habitudes seclude you from meddling in our divisions; so do my age and my illnesses me. Sixty-two is not a season for bustling among young partizans. Indeed, if the times grow perfectly serious, I shall not wish to reach sixty-three. Even a superannuated spectator is then a miserable being; for though insensibility is one of the softenings of old age, neither

¹ Admiral sir George Rodney, who had been dispatched to the relief of Gibraltar, the garrison of which was much distressed for provisions, after taking a convoy of Spanish ships bound to the Caraccas, fell in, on the 16th February, off Cape St. Vincent, with the Spanish fleet, commanded by Don Juan Langara, which he defeated, and captured four sail of the line. [Ed.]

one's feelings or enjoyments can be accompanied with tranquillity. We veterans must hide ourselves in inglorious insecurity, and lament what we cannot prevent; nor shall be listened to, till misfortunes have brought the actors to their senses; and then it will be too late, or they will calm themselves faster than we could preach—but I hope the experience of the last century will have some operation and check our animosities. Surely, too, we shall recollect the ruin a civil war would bring on, when accompanied by such collaterals as French and Spanish wars. Providence alone can steer us amidst all these rocks. I shall watch the interposition of its ægis with anxiety and humility. It saved us this last summer, and nothing else I am sure did—but often the mutual follies of enemies are the instruments of heaven.—If it pleases not to inspire wisdom, I shall be content if it extricate us by the reciprocal blunders and oversights of all parties—of which, at least, we ought never to despair. It is almost my systematic belief, that as cunning and penetration are seldom exerted for good ends, it is the absurdity of mankind that often acts as a succedaneum, and carries on and maintains the equilibrium that Heaven designed should subsist. Adieu, dear sir, shall we live to lay down our heads in peace?

Yours ever.

28th.—A second volume of Sir George Rodney's exploits is arrived to-day. I do not know the authentic circumstances, for I have not been abroad yet, but they say he has taken four more Spanish ships of the line and five frigates; of the former, one of ninety guns. Spain was sick of the war before—how fortunate if she would renounce it!

I have just got a new history of Leicester, in six small volumes. It seems to be superficial—but the author is young and talks modestly, which, if it will not serve instead of merit, makes one at least hope he will improve, and not grow insolent on age and more knowledge. I have also received from Paris a copy of an illumination from *la Cité des dames* of Christina of Pisa² in the

² A fac-simile of an illumination, containing the portrait of Christine de Pise, from a MS. in the British Museum, is to be found in Miss Costello's elegant volume, entitled "*Specimens of the Early Poetry of France*," where the reader will find a very nicely written biographical sketch of this accomplished lady, and several specimens, both in the original and in very elegant translations, of her poetical talents. [Ed.]

French king's library. There is her own portrait with three allegoric figures. I have learnt much more about her, and of her amour with an English peer,³ but I have not time to say more at present.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 6, 1780.

I HAVE this moment received your portrait in glass, dear sir, and am impatient to thank you for it, and tell you how much I value it. It is better executed than I own I expected, and yet I am not quite satisfied with it. The drawing is a little incorrect, the eyes too small in proportion, and the mouth exaggerated. In short, it is a strong likeness of your features, but not of your countenance, which is better, and more serene. However, I am enough content to place it at Strawberry amongst all my favourite, brittle, transitory relics, which will soon vanish with their founder—and with his no great unwillingness for himself.

I take it ill, that you should think I should suspect you of asking *indirectly* for my noble authors—and much more if you would not be so free as to ask for them *directly*—a most trifling present surely—and from you who have made me a thousand! I know I have some copies in my old house in Arlington-street, I hope of both volumes, I am sure of the second—I will soon go thither and look for them.

I have gone through the six volumes of Leicester. The author is so modest and so humble, that I am quite sorry it is so very bad a work; the arrangement detestable, the materials trifling, his reflexions humane but silly. He disposes all under reigns of Roman emperors and English kings, whether they did any thing or nothing at Leicester. I am sorry I have such predilection for

³ John Montacute, earl of Salisbury, who, arriving in Paris, as ambassador from Richard II. to demand in marriage the princess Isabel, daughter of Charles V., soon after the death of Castel, the husband of Christine; was so struck with her beauty and accomplishments as to offer her his hand. This Christine respectfully declined; upon which the earl bade adieu to love, renounced marriage, and, with her consent, brought her eldest son with him to England, to educate and protect. [Ed.]

the histories of particular counties and towns: there certainly does not exist a worse class of reading.

Dr. E. made me a visit last week.—He is not at all less vociferous for his disgrace. I wish I had any guinea fowls.—I can easily get you some eggs from lady Ailesbury, and will ask her for some, that you may have the pleasure of rearing your own chicks—but how can you bear their noise? they are more discordant and clamorous than peacocks. How shall I convey the eggs?

I smiled at Dr. Kippis's bestowing the victory on dean Milles, and a sprig on Mr. Masters. I regard it as I should, if the sexton of Broad-street St. Giles's were to make a lower bow to a cheesemonger of his own parish than to me. They are all three haberdashers of small wares, and welcome to each others civilities. When such men are summoned to a jury on one of their own trade, it is natural they should be partial. They do not reason, but recollect how much themselves have overcharged some yards of buckram. Adieu.

Yours most cordially.

P. S. Mr. Pennicott has shown me a most curious and delightful picture. It is Rose, the royal gardener, presenting the first pine-apple raised in England to Charles II. They are in a garden, with a view of a good private house, such as there are several at Sunbury and about London. It is by far the best likeness of the king I ever saw; the countenance cheerful, good-humoured, and very sensible. He is in brown, lined with orange, and many black ribands, a large flapped hat, dark wig, not tied up, nor yet bushy, a point cravat, no waistcoat, and a tasselled handkerchief hanging from a low pocket. The whole is of the smaller landscape size, and extremely well coloured, with perfect harmony. It was a legacy from London, grandson of him who was partner with Wise.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, March 13, 1780.

You compliment me, my good friend, on a sagacity that is surely very common. How frequently do we see portraits that have caught the features, and missed the countenance or charac-

ter—which is far more difficult to hit, nor is it unfrequent to hear that remark made.

I have confessed to you that I am fond of local histories. It is the general execution of them that I condemn, and that I call *the worst kind of reading*. I cannot comprehend but that they might be performed with taste. I did mention this winter the new edition of Atkyns's Gloucestershire, as having additional descriptions of situations that I thought had merit. I have just got another, a View of Northumberland, in two volumes quarto, with cuts; but I do not devour it fast, for the author's predilection is to Roman antiquities, which, such as are found in this island, are very indifferent, and inspire me with little curiosity. A barbarous country, so remote from the seat of empire, and occupied by a few legions that very rarely decided any great events, is not very interesting, though one's own country.—Nor do I care a straw for a stone that preserves the name of a standard-bearer of a cohort, or of a colonel's daughter. Then I have no patience to read the tiresome disputes of antiquaries to settle forgotten names of vanished towns, and to prove that such a village was called something else in Antoninus's Itinerary. I do not say the Gothic antiquities I like are of more importance; but at least they exist. The site of a Roman camp, of which nothing remains but a bank, gives me not the smallest pleasure. One knows they had square camps—has one a clearer idea from the spot, which is barely distinguishable? How often does it happen that the lumps of earth are so imperfect, that it is never clear whether they are Roman, Druidic, Danish, or Saxon fragments—the moment it is uncertain, it is plain they furnish no specific idea of art or history, and then I neither desire to see or read of them. I have been diverted too by another work, in which I am personally a little concerned. Yesterday was published an octavo pretending to contain the correspondence of Hackman and Miss Ray that he murdered.¹ I doubt whether

¹ The work Walpole alludes to was written by sir Herbert Croft, bart. It was a compound of fact and fiction, called, "Love and Madness, a Story too true, in a Series of Letters between Parties, whose names would, perhaps, be mentioned, were they less known or less lamented. London, 1780."* This work ran through several editions, the first of which contains a poem, "*The Rose*," omitted in the subsequent ones.

In 1800, sir Herbert published "Chatterton and Love and Madness, in a Letter from Sir Herbert Croft to Mr. Nichols." [Ed.]

the letters are genuine, and yet, if fictitious, they are executed well, and enter into his character—her's appears less natural, and yet the editors were certainly more likely to be in possession of her's than his. It is not probable that lord Sandwich should have sent what he found in her apartments to the press. No account is pretended to be given of how they came to light.

You will wonder how I should be concerned in this correspondence, who never saw either of the lovers in my days. In fact, my being dragged in is a reason for doubting the authenticity; nor can I believe that the long letter in which I am frequently mentioned, could be written by the wretched lunatic. It pretends that Miss Ray desired him to give her a particular account of Chatterton. He does give a most ample one—but is there a glimpse of probability, that a being so frantic, should have gone to Bristol, and sifted Chatterton's sister and others with as much cool curiosity as Mr. Lort could do? and at such a moment! Besides, he murdered miss Ray—I think in March; my printed defence was not at all dispersed before the preceding January or February, nor do I conceive that Hackman could even see it. There are notes indeed by the editor, who has certainly seen it—but I rather imagine that the editor, whoever he is, composed the whole volume—I am acquitted of being accessory to the lad's death, which is gracious, but much blamed for speaking of his bad character, and for being too hard on his forgeries, though I took so much pains to specify the innocence of them; and for his character, I only quoted the words of his own editor and panegyrist. I did not repeat what Dr. Goldsmith told me at the Royal Academy, where I first heard of his death, that he went by the appellation of *The Young Villain*—but it is not new to me, as you know, to be blamed by two opposite parties. The editor has in one place confounded me and my uncle, who, he says, as is true, checked lord Chatham for being too forward a young man in 1740. In that year I was not even come into parliament; and I must have been absurd indeed if I had taunted lord Chatham with youth, who was at least six or seven years younger than he was—and how could he reply by reproaching me with old age, who was not then twenty-three? I shall make no answer to these absurdities, nor to any part of the work. Blunder I see people will, and talk of what they do not understand; and what care I? There is another

trifling mistake of still less consequence. The editor supposes it was Macpherson who communicated Ossian to me. It was sir David Dalrymple who sent me the first specimen. Macpherson did once come to me—but my credulity was then a little shaken.

Lady Ailesbury has promised me guinea eggs for you, but they have not yet begun to lay.

I am well acquainted with lady Craven's little tale dedicated to me.² It is careless and incorrect, but there are very pretty things in it.

I will stop, for I fear I have written to you too much lately. One you did not mention: I think it was of the 28th of last month.

Yours entirely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 30, 1780.

I CANNOT be told that you are extremely ill, and refrain from begging to hear that you are better—Let me have but one line; if it is good, it will satisfy me. If you was not out of order, I would scold you, for making excuses about the Noble Authors; it was not kind to be so formal about a trifle.

We do not differ so much in politics as you think, for when they grow too serious, they are so far from inflaming my zeal, they make me more moderate; and I can as easily discern the faults on my own side as on the other; nor would assist Whigs more than Tories in altering the constitution.

The project of annual parliaments, or of adding a hundred members to the House of Commons, would I think be very unwise, and will never have my approbation—but a temperate man is not likely to be listened to in turbulent times; and, when one has not youth and lungs, or ambition to make oneself attended to, one can only be silent and lament, and preserve oneself blameless of any mischief that is done or attempted.

Yours most sincerely.

² "The Miniature Picture." [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 11, 1780.

MR. Godfrey, the engraver, told me yesterday that Mr. Tyson is dead.—I am sorry for it, though he had left me off. A much older friend of mine died yesterday, but of whom I must say the same, George Montagu, whom you must remember at Eton and Cambridge. I should have been exceedingly concerned for him a few years ago, but he had dropped me, partly from politics and partly from caprice, for we never had any quarrel; but he was grown an excessive humourist, and had shed almost all his friends as well as me. He had parts, and infinite vivacity and originality till of late years, and it grieved me much that he had changed towards me, after a friendship of between thirty and forty years.

I am told that a nephew of the provost of King's has preached and printed a most flaming sermon, which condemns the whole opposition to the stake. Pray who is it, and on what occasion? Mr. Bryant has published an answer to Dr. Priestley.¹ I bought it, but though I have a great value for the author, the subject is so metaphysical, and so above human decision, I soon laid it aside.

I hope you can send me a good account of yourself, though the spring is so unfavourable.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Friday night, May 19, 1780.

By to-morrow's coach you will receive a box of guinea-hens' eggs, which lady Ailesbury sent me to-day from Park-place. I hope they will arrive safe and all be hatched.

I thank you for the account of the sermon and the portrait of the uncle. They will satisfy me without buying the former. As

¹ An address to Dr. Priestley, upon his *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated*. 8vo., 1780. London. [Ed.]

I knew Mr. Jos. Spence,¹ I do not think I should have been so much delighted as Dr. Kippis with reading his letters. He was a good-natured, harmless little soul, but more like a silver penny than a genius. It was a neat fiddle-faddle, bit of sterling, that had read good books and kept good company, but was too trifling for use, and only fit to please a child.

I hesitate on purchasing Mr. Gough's second edition. I do not think there was a guinea's worth of entertainment in the first; how can the additions be worth a guinea and a half? I have been aware of the royal author you tell me of, and have noted him for a future edition; but that will not appear in my own time—because, besides that, it will have the castrations in my original copy, and other editions that I am not impatient to produce. I have been solicited to reprint the work, but do not think it fair to give a very imperfect edition, when I could print it complete, which I do not choose to do, as I have an aversion to literary squabbles; one seems to think one's self too important, when one engages in a controversy on one's writings; and when one does not vindicate them, the answer passes for victor, as you see Dr. Kippis allots the palm to Dr. Milles, though you know I have so much more to say in defence of my hypothesis. I have actually some hopes of still more, of which I have heard, but till I see it, I shall not reckon upon it as on my side.

Mr. Lort told me of king James's procession to St. Paul's; but they ask such a price for it, and I care so little for James I., that I have not been to look at the picture.

Your electioneering will probably be increased immediately. Old Mr. Thomas Townsend is at the point of death. The parliament will probably be dissolved before another session. We wanted nothing but drink to inflame our madness, which I do not confine to politics—but what signifies it to throw out general censures? We old folks are apt to think nobody wise but ourselves.—I wish the disgraces of these last two or three years did not justify a little severity more than flows from the peevishness of years!

Yours ever.

¹ The author of "Polymetis," and of that better known and most agreeable volume, edited by Malone and Singer respectively—"Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters of Books and Men, collected from the Conversation of Mr. Pope and others." First printed in 1820. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 30, 1780.

I HOPE you will bring your eggs to a fair market. At last I have got from Mr. Bonus my altar doors which I bought at Mr. Ives's; he has repaired them admirably. I would not suffer him to repaint or varnish them. Three are indubitably duke Humphrey of Gloucester, cardinal Beaufort, and archbishop Kemp. The fourth I cannot make out. It is a man in a crimson garment lined with white, and not tonsured. He is in the stable with cattle, and has the air of Joseph—but over his head hangs a large shield with these arms.¹

* * * * *

The Cornish choughs are sable on or, the other three divisions are gules, on the first of which is a gold crescent.

The second arms have three bull's heads sable, horned or. The chevron was so changed that Bonus thought it sable, but I think it was gules, and then it would be Bullen or Boleyn. Lord de Ferrers says, the first are the arms of Sir Bartholomew Tate, who he finds married a Sanders. Edmondson's new Dictionary of Heraldry confirms both arms for Tate and Sanders, except that Sanders bore the chevron ermine—which it may have been. But what I wish to discover is, whether sir Bartholomew Tate was a benefactor to St. Edmondsbury, whence these doors came, or was in any shape a retainer to the duke of Gloucester or cardinal Beaufort. The duke's and sir Bartholomew's figures were on the insides of the doors (which I have had sawed into four pannels) and are painted in a far superior style to the cardinal and the archbishop, which are very hard and dry. The two others are so good that they are in the style of the school of the Caracci. They at least were painted by some Italian; the draperies have large and bold folds, and one wonders how they could be executed in the reign of Henry VI. I shall be very glad if you can help me to any lights, at least about sir Bartholomew. I intend to place them in my chapel, as they will aptly accompany the shrine. The duke and arch-

¹ Here Mr. Walpole had sketched in a rough draught of the arms. [Or.]

bishops agree perfectly with their portraits in my marriage of Henry VI., and prove how rightly I guessed. The cardinal's is rather a longer and thinner visage—but that he might have in the latter end of life; and in the marriage he has the red bonnet on, which shortens his face. On the door he is represented in the character he ought to have possessed, a pious contrite look, not the truer resemblance which Shakspeare drew—he dies and makes no sign!—but Annibal Caracci himself could not paint like our Raphael poet—Pray don't venture yourself in any more electioneering riots—you see the mob do not respect poets, nor, I suppose, Antiquaries.

P.S. I am in no haste for an answer to my queries.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 12, 1780.

MY DEAR LORD,

If the late events had been within the common proportion of news, I would have tried to entertain your lordship with an account of them; but they were far beyond that size, and could only create horror and indignation. Religion has often been the cloak of injustice, outrage, and villany: in our late tumults,¹ it scarce kept on its mask a moment; its persecution was downright robbery; and it was so drunk, that it killed its banditti faster than they could plunder. The tumults have been carried on in so violent and scandalous a manner, that I trust they will have no copies. When prisons are levelled to the ground, when the

¹ The riots of 1780, when lord George Gordon raised a No Popery cry, and assembled many thousands of persons in St. George's Fields to accompany him to the House of Commons, with a petition for the repeal of the act passed for the relief of the Roman Catholics in the preceding session. The petition was, of course, rejected; which being communicated to the mob by Lord George, they dispersed for awhile, but on that evening commenced their work of mischief, destroying two Catholic chapels in Duke-street and Warwick-street; Newgate and all the other prisons were likewise fired; the Bank was attempted; and the riot was not quelled until 210 persons were killed and 248 wounded, of which 75 died in the hospitals. Lord George was committed to the Tower, and many of the ringleaders, after being tried by special commissioners, suffered the extreme penalty of the law. [Ed.]

bank is aimed at, and reformation is attempted by conflagrations, the savages of Canada are the only fit allies of Lord George Gordon² and his crew. The Tower is much too dignified a prison for him—but he had left no other.

I came out of town on Friday, having seen a good deal of the shocking transactions of Wednesday night—in fact, it was difficult to be in London and not see, or think some part of it in flames—I saw those of the King's Bench, New Prison, and those on the three sides of the Fleet-market, which united into one blaze. The town and parks are now one camp—the next disagreeable sight to the capital being in ashes. It will still not have been a fatal tragedy, if it brings the nation *one* and all to their senses. It will still be not quite an unhappy country, if we reflect that the old constitution, exactly as it was in the last reign, was the most desirable of any in the universe. It made us *then* the first people in Europe—we have a vast deal of ground to recover—but can we take a better path than that which king William pointed out to us? I mean the system he left us at the revolution. I am averse to *all* changes of it—it fitted us just as it was.

For some time even individuals must be upon their guard. Our new and now imprisoned apostle has delivered so many congenial saint Peters from jail, that one hears of nothing but robberies on the highway. Your lordship's sister, lady Browne, and I have been at Twickenham-park this evening, and kept together, and had a horseman at our return. Baron d'Aguiar was shot at in that very lane on Thursday night. A troop of the fugitives had rendezvoused in Combe-wood, and were dislodged thence yesterday by the light-horse.

I do not know a syllable but what relates to these disturbances. The newspapers have neglected few truths. Lies, without their natural propensity to falsehoods, they could not avoid,

² Lord George Gordon was brother of Alexander, duke of Gordon, and certainly not at all times in his right mind. Some years after his acquittal, on the indictment preferred against him in the court of King's Bench as instigator of the riots, he was convicted of a libel on Marie Antoinette and Count d'Ademar, one of the French ministry. To avoid punishment, he fled the country, but shortly afterwards was discovered at Birmingham in the garb of a Jew, and committed to Newgate, pursuant to his sentence, where he lived some time, professing the Jewish religion, having undergone the extreme rites of it; and where he died 1st November 1793. [Ed.]

for every minute produces some, at least exaggerations. We were threatened with swarms of good Protestants *à bruler* from all quarters, and report sent various detachments from the metropolis on similar errands; but thank God they have been but reports!—Oh! when shall we have peace and tranquillity? I hope your lordship and lady Strafford will at least enjoy the latter in your charming woods. I have long doubted which of our passions is the strongest—perhaps every one of them is equally strong in some person or other—but I have no doubt but ambition is the most detestable, and the most inexcusable; for its mischiefs are by far the most extensive, and its enjoyments by no means proportioned to its anxieties. The latter, I believe, is the case of most passions—but then all but ambition cost little pain to any but the possessor. An ambitious man must be divested of all feeling but for himself. The torment of others is his high road to happiness. Were the transmigration of souls true, and accompanied by consciousness, how delighted would Alexander, or Cræsus be, to find themselves on four legs, and divested of a wish to conquer new worlds, or to heap up all the wealth of this! Adieu, my dear lord!

I am, most gratefully, &c.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, June 15, 1780.

You may like to know one is alive, dear sir, after a massacre, and the conflagration of a capital. I was in it, both on the Friday and on the *Black Wednesday*; the most horrible sight I ever beheld, and which, for six hours together, I expected to end in half the town being reduced to ashes. I can give you little account of the original of this shocking affair; negligence was certainly its nurse, and religion only its godmother. The ostensible author is in the Tower. Twelve or fourteen thousand men have quelled all tumults; and as no bad account is come from the country, except for a moment at Bath, and as eight days* have passed—nay, more, since the commencement—I flatter myself the whole nation is shocked at the scene; and that, if plan there was, it was laid only in and for the metro-

polis. The lowest and most villanous people, and to no great amount, were almost the sole actors.

I hope your electioneering riotry has not, nor will mix in these tumults. It would be most absurd; for lord Rockingham, the duke of Richmond, sir George Saville, and Mr. Burke, the patrons of toleration, were devoted to destruction as much as the ministers. The rails torn from sir George's house were the chief weapons and instruments of the mob. For the honour of the nation I should be glad to have it proved that the French were the engineers. You and I have lived too long for comfort—shall we close our eyes in peace? I will not trouble you more about the arms I sent you: I should like that they were those of the family of Boleyn; and since I cannot be sure they were not, why should not I fancy them so? I revert to the prayer for peace. You and I, that can amuse ourselves with our books and papers, feel as much indignation at the turbulent as they have scorn for us. It is hard at least that they who disturb nobody can have no asylum in which to pursue their innoxious indolence! Who is secure against Jack Straw and a whirlwind? How I abominate Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, who routed the poor Otaheitans out of the centre of the ocean, and carried our abominable passions amongst them! not even that poor little speck could escape European restlessness. Well, I have seen many tempestuous scenes, and outlived them! the present prospect is too thick to see through—it is well hope never forsakes us. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 4, 1780.

I ANSWER your letter the moment I receive it, to beg you will by no means take any notice, not even indirectly and without my name, of the life of Mr. Baker. I am earnest against its being known to exist. I should be teased to show it.—Mr. Gough might inquire about it—I do not desire his acquaintance; and above all things I am determined, if I can help it, to have no controversy while I live. You know I have hitherto suppressed

my answers to the critics of Richard III., for that reason ;—and above all things, I hate theologic or political controversy—nor need you fear my disputing with you, though we disagree very considerably indeed about papists and presbyterians. I hope you have not yet sent the MS. to Mr. Lort, and if you have not, do entreat you to efface undecipherably what you have said about my life of Mr. Baker.

I am heartily glad you enjoy health, and am equally sorry you are teased about Burnham. I have, thank God, been better lately than for a year past—but I have some thoughts of going to Malvern for a month or six weeks the end of this month.

I am sorry the eggs failed. If the journey was too long, it is vain to offer you more, though I can procure them next season.

Pray satisfy me that no mention of Mr. Baker's life shall appear in print. I can by no means consent to it, and I am sure you will prevent it.

Yours sincerely,

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 9, 1780.

I AM very happy at receiving a letter from your lordship this moment, as I thought it very long since we had corresponded, but am afraid of being troublesome, when I have not the excuse of thanking you, or something worth telling you, which in truth is not the case at present. No soul, whether interested or not, but deafens one about elections. I always detested them, even when in parliament ; and when I lived a good deal at White's, preferred hearing of Newmarket to elections ; for the former, being uttered in a language I did not understand, did not engage my attention ; but as they talked of elections in *English*, I could not help knowing what they said. It does surprise me, I own, that people can choose to stuff their heads with details and circumstances, of which in six weeks they will never hear or think more. The weather till now has been the chief topic of conversation. Of late, it has been the third very hot summer ; but refreshed by so little rain, that the banks of the Thames have been and are, I believe, like those of the Manzanares. The night before last we had some good showers, and to-day a thick

fog has dissolved in some as thin as gauze. Still I am not quite sorry to enjoy the weather of adust climates without their tempests and insects. Lady Cowper I lately visited, and but lately: if what I hear is true, I shall be a gainer, for they talk of lord D * * * having her house at Richmond: like your lordship, I confess I was surprised at his choice. I know nothing to the prejudice of the young lady—but I should not have selected, for so gentle and very amiable a man, a sister of the empress of fashion, nor a daughter of the goddess of wisdom.

They talk of great dissatisfactions in the fleet. Geary and Barrington are certainly retired. It looks, if this deplorable war should continue, as if all our commanders by sea and land were to be disgraced or disgusted.

The people here have christened Mr. Shirley's new house, *Spite-hall*.¹ It is dismal to think that one may live to seventy-seven, and go out of the world doing as ill-natured an act as possible! When I am reduced to detail the gazette of Twickenham, I had better release your lordship—but either way it is from the utmost attention and respect for your lordship and lady Strafford, as I am ever

Most devotedly and gratefully yours.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 27, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

I must inquire how you do after all your electioneering agitations, which have growled even around your hermitage. Candidates and their emissaries are like Pope's authors,

They pierce our thickets, through our groves they glide.

However, I have barred my doors; and when I would not go to an election for myself, I would not for any one else.

Has not a third real summer, and one so very dry, assisted your complaints? I have been remarkably well, and better than for these five years. Would I could say the same of all my

¹ Because built (it was said) on purpose to intercept a view of the Thames from his opposite neighbour. [Ed.]

friends—but, alas ! I expect every day to hear that I have lost my dear old friend madame du Deffand.¹ She was indeed near eighty-four, but retained all her interior faculties—two days ago the letters from Paris forbad all hopes. So I reckon myself dead as to France, where I have kept up no other connexion.

I am going at last to publish my fourth volume of *Painters*, which though printed so long, I have literally treated by Horace's rule, *Nonumque prematur in annum*. Tell me how I shall send it to you.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Oct. 3, 1780.

I DID not go to Malvern, and therefore cannot certify you, my good sir, whether Tom Hearne mistook stone for brass or not, though I dare to say your criticism is just.

My book, if I can possibly, shall go to the inn to-morrow, or next day at least. You will find a great deal of rubbish in it, with all your partiality—but I shall have done with it.

I cannot thank you enough for your goodness about your notes that you promised Mr. Grose—but I cannot possibly be less generous and less disinterested: nor can by any means be the cause of your breaking your word. In short, I insist on your sending your notes to him—and as to my life of Mr. Baker, if it is known to exist, nobody can make me produce it sooner than I please, nor at all if I do not please; so pray send your accounts, and leave me to be stout with our antiquaries, or curious. I shall not satisfy the latter, and don't care a straw for the former.

The master of Pembroke (who he is, I don't know) is like the lover who said,

Have I not seen thee where thou hast not been?

I have been in Kent with Mr. Barrett, but was not at Ramsgate; the master, going thither, perhaps saw me. It is a

¹ Madame du Deffand died on the 24th September 1780, having bequeathed the whole of her MSS., papers, letters, and books to Walpole. [Ed.]

mistake not worth rectifying. I have no time for more, being in the midst of the delivery of my books.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 11, 1780.

I AM afraid you are not well, my good sir; for you are so obligingly punctual, that I think you would have acknowledged the receipt of my last volume, if you were not out of order.

Lord Dacre lent me the new edition of Mr. Gough's Topography, and the ancient maps and quantity of additions tempted me to buy it. I have not gone through much above half of the first volume, and find it more entertaining than the first edition. This is no partiality, for I think he seems rather disposed, though civilly, to find cavils with me. Indeed, in the passage in which I am most mentioned, he not only gives a very confused, but quite a wrong account: as in other places, he records some trifles in my possession not worth recording—but I know that we antiquaries are but too apt to think, that whatever has had the honour of entering our ears, is worthy of being laid before the eyes of every body else. The story I mean is p. xi. of the preface. Now the three volumes of drawings and tombs, by Mr. Lethueillier and sir Charles Fredericke, for which Mr. G * * * says I refused 200*l.*, and are now lord Bute's—are not lord Bute's, but mine, and for which I never was asked 200*l.* and for which I gave 60*l.*—full enough. The circumstances were much more entertaining than Mr. G.'s perplexed account. Bishop Lyttelton told me sir Charles Fredericke complained of Mr. L.'s not bequeathing them to him, as he had been a joint labourer with him; and that sir Charles wished I would not bid against him for them, as they were to be sold by auction. I said this was a very reasonable request, and that I was ready to oblige sir Charles; but as I heard others meant to bid high for the books, I should wish to know how far he would go, and that I would not oppose him—but should the books exceed the price sir Charles was willing to give, I should like to be at liberty to bid for them against others. However, added I, as

sir Charles (who lived then in Berkeley-square, as I did then in Arlington-street), passes by my door every time he goes to the house of commons, if he will call on me, we will make such agreement—you will scarce believe the sequel. The dignity of sir Charles Fredericke was hurt that I should propose his making me the first visit, though to serve himself—nothing could be less out of my imagination than the ceremonial of visits; though when he was so simple as to make a point of it, I could not see how in any light I was called on to make the first visit—and so the treaty ended; and so I bought the books. There was another work, I think in two volumes, which was their *Diary of their Tour*, with a few slight views. Bishop Lyttelton proposed them to me, and engaged to get them for me from Mr. Lethueillier's sister for ten guineas. She hesitated, the bishop died, I thought no more of them, and they may be what lord Bute has. There is another assertion in Mr. Gough, which I can authentically contradict. He says sir Matthew Decker first introduced ananas, p. 134. My very curious picture of Rose, the royal gardener, presenting the first ananas to Charles II., proves the culture here earlier by several years.

P. 373, he seems to doubt my assertion of Gravelot's¹ making drawings of tombs in Gloucestershire, because he never met with any engravings from them. I took my account from Vertue, who certainly knew what he said. I bought at Vertue's own sale some of Gravelot's drawings of our regal monuments, which Vertue engraved—but, which is stronger, Mr. Gough himself a few pages after, *viz.* in p. 387, mentions Gravelot's drawings of Tewkesbury church—which being in Gloucestershire, Mr. G. might have believed me that Gravelot did draw in that county. This is a little like Mr. Masters's being angry with me for taking liberties with bishops and chancellors, and then abusing grossly one who had been both bishop and chancellor. I forgot that in the note on sir Charles Fredericke, Mr. Gough calls Mr. Worsley, Wortley. In page 354, he says Rooker exhibited a drawing of Waltham-cross to the Royal Academy of Sciences—pray where is that academy? I suppose he means that of painting. I find a few omissions; one very comical; he says Penshurst was celebrated by Ben Jonson, and seems totally in

¹ Henry Francis Gravelot, the famous engraver, born at Paris 1699, died 1773. [Ed.]

the dark as to how much more fame it owes to Waller. We antiquaries are a little apt to get laughed at for knowing what every body has forgotten, and for being ignorant of what every child knows. Do not tell him of these things, for I do not wish to vex him. I hope I was mistaken, and shall hear that you are well,

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 24, 1780.

I AM sorry I was so much in the right in guessing you had been ill, but at our age there is little sagacity in such divination. In my present holidays from the gout, I have a little rheumatism, or some of those accompaniments.

I have made several more notes to the new Topography, but none of consequence enough to transcribe. It is well it is a book only for the adept, or the scorers would often laugh. Mr. Gough, speaking of some cross that has been removed, says, there is now *an unmeaning market-house* in its place. Saving his reverence and our prejudices, I doubt there is a good deal more *meaning* in a market-house than in a cross. They tell me that there are numberless mistakes. Mr. Pennant,¹ whom I saw yesterday, says so. *He* is not one of our plodders; rather the other extreme. His *corporal* spirits (for I cannot call them animal) do not allow him time to digest any thing. He gave a round jump from ornithology to antiquity—and, as if they had any relation, thought he understood every thing that lay between them. These adventures divert me who am got on shore, and find how sweet it is to look back on those who are toiling in deep waters, whether in ships, or cock-boats, or on old rotten planks. I am sorry for the dean of Exeter; if he

¹ Thomas Pennant, esq., the naturalist and antiquarian, was born at Downing, in Flintshire, in 1726, and died there on the 16th December 1798. His first work was the “British Zoology,” published in 1766, under the inspection of the Cymmrodorian Society. Of his antiquarian works, “Some Account of London” is the best, and one of the most pleasing pieces of topographical history that ever appeared. [Ed.]

dies, I conclude the leaden mace of the Antiquarian Society will be given to judge Barrington,²

et simili frondescet Virga metallo.

I endeavoured to give our antiquaries a little wrench towards taste—but it was in vain. Sandby and our engravers have lent them a great deal—but there it stops. Captain Grose's dissertations are as dull and silly as if they were written for the Ostrogoth maps of the beginning of the New Topography; and which are so square and so incomprehensible that they look as if they were ichnographies of the new Jerusalem. I am delighted with having done with the professions of author and printer, and intend to be most comfortably lazy, I was going to say idle (but that would not be new) for the rest of my days.

If there was a peace, I would build my offices—if there is not soon, we shall be bankrupt—nay, I do not know what may happen as it is—well! Mr. Grose will have plenty of ruins to engrave! The Royal Academy will make a fine mass, with what remains of old Somerset-house.

Adieu! my good sir! Let me know you are well. You want nothing else, for you can always amuse yourself, and do not let the foolish world disturb you.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 30, 1780.

I AM sorry, my dear sir, that you should be so humble with me your ancient friend, and to whom you have ever been so liberal, as to make an apology for desiring me to grant the request of another person. I am not less sorry that I shall not, I fear, be able to comply with it; and you must have the patience to hear my reasons. The first edition of the *Anecdotes* was of three hundred, of the two first volumes: and of as many

² The hon. Daines Barrington, third son of John, first viscount Barrington, and author of the "Observations on the Statutes," a valuable and curious work; of which an excellent notice appeared in the ninth volume of the *Retrospective Review*. [Ed.]

of the third volume, and of the volume of engravers. There was an edition of three hundred of all four. Unluckily I did not keep any number back of the two first volumes, and literally have none but those I reserved for myself. Of the other two I have two or three; and, I believe, I have a first, but without the cuts. If I can, with some odd volumes that I kept for corrections, make out a decent set, the library of the University shall have them; but you must not promise them, lest I should not be able to perform.

Of my fourth new volume I printed six hundred; but as they *can* be had, I believe not a third part is sold. This is a very plain lesson to me, that my editions sell for their curiosity, and not for any merit in them—and so they would if I printed Mother Goose's Tales,¹ and but a few. As my Anecdotes of Painting have been published at such distant periods, and in three divisions, complete sets will be seldom seen; so, if I am humbled as an author, I may be vain as a printer; and, when one has nothing else to be vain of, it is certainly very little worth while to be proud of that.

I will now trust you with a secret, but beg Mr. Gough may not know it, for he will print it directly. Though I forgot *Alma Mater*, I have not forgotten my *Almæ Nutrices*, wet or dry, I mean Eton and King's. I have laid aside for them, and left them in my will, as complete a set as I could, of all I have printed. A few I did give them at first—but I have for neither

¹ The author of the Collection of Popular Stories, alluded to by Walpole, under the title of Mother Goose's Tales, and which have been carried into every quarter of the world, was Charles Perrault d'Armanecourt, brother of Claude Perrault, the architect. The earliest edition of this work appeared towards the close of the seventeenth century, under the title, "*Histoires ou Contes du Tems passé*;" the name "*Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*" being introduced in the Frontispiece. They are written in a very simple, graceful, and characteristic style, and were dedicated to a daughter of Louis Quatorze, the dedication terminating with the following neatly-turned compliment:

"Pouvais-je mieux choisir pour rendre vraisemblable
Ce que la fable a d'incroyable?
Et jamais fée au tems jadis,
Fit elle à jeune créature,
Plus de dons et de dons exquis
Que vous en a fait la nature." [Ed.]

a perfect set of the *Anecdotes*, I mean not the two first volumes. I should be much obliged to you, if, without naming me, you could inform yourself if I did send to King's those two first volumes—I believe not.

I will now explain what I said above of Mr. Gough. He has learnt, I suppose from my engravers, that I have had some views of Strawberry-hill engraved.—Slap dash, down it went, and he has even specified each view in his second volume. This curiosity is a little impertinent—but he has made me some amends by a new blunder, for he says they are engraved for a second edition of my *Catalogue*. Now I have certainly printed but one edition, for which the prints are designed. He says truly, that I printed but a few for use; consequently, I by no means wished the whole world should know it; but he is very silly, and so I will say no more about him. Dr. Lort called yesterday, and asked if I had any message for you; but I had written too lately.

Mr. Pennant has been, as I think I told you, in town: by this time I conclude he is, as lady Townley says of fifty pounds, all over the kingdom. When Dr. Lort returns, I shall be very glad to read your transcript of Wolsey's letters: *for*, in your hand, I *can* read them.² I will not have them but by some very safe conveyance, and will return them with equal care.

I can have no objection to Robin Masters being wooden-head of the Antiquarian Society: but, I suppose, he is not dignified enough for them. I should prefer, the judge too, because a coif makes him more like an old woman, and I reckon that Society the midwives of superannuated miscarriages. I am grieved for the return of your head-aches—I doubt you write too much.

Yours most sincerely.

P.S. It will be civil to tell Dr. Farmer that I do not know whether I can obey his commands; but that I will if I can. As to a distinguished place, I beg not to be preferred to much better authors; nay, the more conspicuous, the more likely to be stolen for the reasons I have given you, of there being few complete sets, and true collectors are mighty apt to steal.

² Those who have had occasion to consult Cole's MSS., those MSS. so often alluded to in this correspondence, and which are now deposited in the British Museum, will agree with Walpole as to their perfect legibility. They are written in a hand which is as easily read as letter-press itself. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 19, 1780.

I CANNOT leave you for a moment in error, my good sir, when you transfer a compliment to me, to which I have not the most slender claim; and defraud another of it to whom it is due.

The friend of Mr. Gray, in whom authorship caused no jealousy, or variance, as Mr. Mainwaring says truly, is Mr. Mason. I certainly never excelled in poetry, and never attempted the species of poetry alluded to, odes. Dr. L.¹ I suppose is removing to a living or prebend, at least; I hope so. He may run a risk if he carries his book to Lambeth. *Sono sonate venti tre hore e mezza*, as Alexander VIII. said to his nephew, when he was chosen pope in extreme old age. My lord of Canterbury's is not extreme, but very tottering. I found in Mr. Gough's new edition, that in the Pepysian library is a view of the theatre in Dorset Gardens, and views of four or five other ancient great mansions. Do the folks of Magdalen ever suffer copies of such things to be taken? If they would, is there any body at Cambridge that would execute them, and reasonably? Answer me quite at your leisure; and, also, what and by whom the altar-piece is, that lord Carlisle has given to King's. I did not know he had been of our college. I have two or three plates of Strawberry more than those you mention, but my collections are so numerous, and from various causes my prints have been in such confusion, that at present I neither know where the plates or proofs are. I intend next summer to set about completing my plan of the catalogue and its prints; and, when I have found any of the plates or proofs, you shall certainly have those you want. There are the two large views of the house, one of the cottage, one of the library, one of the front to the road, and the chimney-piece in the Holbein room. I think these are all that are finished—oh! yes, I believe the prior's garden; but I have not seen them these two years. I was so ill the summer before last, that I attended to nothing; the little I thought of in that

¹ Dr. Michael Lort. He published, in 1790, "A short Commentary on the Lord's Prayer." [Ed.]

way last summer, was to get out my last volume of the Anecdotes—now I have nothing to trouble myself about as an editor, and that not publicly, but to finish my catalogue—and that will be awkwardly enough ; for so many articles have been added to my collection since the description was made, that I must add them in the appendix, or reprint it ; and, what is more inconvenient, the positions of many of the pictures have been changed ; and so it will be a lame piece of work. Adieu, my dear sir.

Yours most cordially.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

January 3, 1781.

AFTER I had written my note to you last night, I called on * * * * *, who gave me the dismal account of Jamaica,¹ that you will see in the gazette, and of the damage done to our shipping. Admiral Rowley is safe ; but they are in apprehensions for Walsingham. He told me, too, what is not in the gazette ; that of the expedition against the Spanish settlements, not a single man survives ! The papers to-day, I see, speak of great danger to Gibraltar. * * * * * * * * repeated to me his great desire that you should publish your speech, as he told you. I do not conceive why *he* is so eager for it,² for he professes total despair about America. It looks to me as if there was a wish of throwing the blame somewhere—but I profess I am too simple to dive into the objects of shades of intrigues ; nor do I care about them. We shall be reduced to a miserable little island ; and from a mighty empire sink into as insignificant a country as Denmark or Sardinia !

¹ On the 3d October 1780, occurred one of the most dreadful hurricanes ever experienced in the West Indies. In Jamaica, Savannah La Mar, with three hundred of its inhabitants, was utterly swept away by an irruption of the sea ; and at Barbadoes, on the 10th, Bridge Town, the capital of the island, was almost levelled to the ground, and several thousands of the inhabitants perished. [Ed.]

² Introductory of a motion “for leave to bring in a bill for quieting the troubles that have for some time subsisted between Great Britain and America, and enabling his majesty to send out commissioners, with full power to treat with America for that purpose.” [Ed.]

When our trade and marine are gone, the latter of which we keep up by unnatural efforts, to which our debt will put a stop, we shall lose the East Indies as Portugal did ; and then France will dictate to us more imperiously than ever we did to Ireland, which is in a manner already gone, too ! These are mortifying reflections, to which an English mind cannot easily accommodate itself—But, alas ! we have been pursuing the very conduct that France would have prescribed, and more than with all her presumption she could have dared to expect. Could she flatter herself that we would take no advantage of the dilatoriness and unwillingness of Spain to enter into the war ? that we would reject the disposition of Russia to support us ? and that our still more natural friend Holland³ would be driven into the league against us ? All this has happened ; and, like an infant, we are delighted with having set our own frock in a blaze !—I sit and gaze with astonishment at our phrensy—Yet why ? Are not nations as liable to intoxication as individuals ? Are not predictions founded on calculation oftener rejected than the prophecies of dreamers ? Do we not act precisely like Charles Fox, who thought he had discovered a new truth in figures, when he preached that wise doctrine, that nobody could want money that would pay enough for it ?—The consequence was, that in two years he left himself without the possibility of borrowing a shilling. I am not surprised at the spirits of a boy of parts—I am not surprised at the people—I do wonder at government, that games away its consequence. For what are we now really at war with America, France, Spain, and Holland ?—Not with hopes of reconquering America, not with the smallest prospect of conquering a foot of land from France, Spain, or Holland ?—No ; we are at war on the defensive, to protect what is left, or more truly to stave off, for a year perhaps, a peace that must proclaim our nakedness and impotence. I would not willingly recur to that womanish vision of, something may turn up in our favour ! That some-

³ Mr. Henry Lawrens, president of the American council, having been taken by one of the king's frigates early in October 1780, on his passage to Holland, and it being discovered by the papers in his possession that the American States had been long carrying on a secret correspondence with Amsterdam, Sir Joseph Yorke, the British minister at the Hague, demanded a satisfactory explanation ; but the same not being afforded, hostilities against Holland were declared on the 28th December 1780 [Ed.]

thing must be a naval victory that will annihilate at once all the squadrons of Europe—must wipe off forty millions of new debt—reconcile the affections of America, that for six years we have laboured to alienate : and that must recall out of the grave the armies and sailors that are perished—and that must make thirteen provinces willing to receive the law, without the necessity of keeping ten thousand men amongst them. The gigantic imagination of lord Chatham would not entertain such a chimera. Lord * * * * perhaps would say he did, rather than not undertake ; or Mr. Burke could form a metaphoric vision that would satisfy no imagination but his own : but I, who am *nullius addictus jurare in verba*, have no hopes either in our resources or in our geniuses, and look on my country already as undone ! —It is grievous—but I shall not have much time to lament its fall !

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 7, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I will not leave you a moment in suspense about the safety of your very valuable volume, which you have so kindly sent me, and which I have just received, with the enclosed letters, and your other yesterday. I have not time to add a word more at present, being full of business, having the night before last received an account of lady Orford's death at Pisa, and a copy of her will, which obliges me to write several letters, and to see my relations. She has left every thing in her power to her *friend* cavalier Mozzi, at Florence ; but her son comes into a large estate, besides her great jointure. You may imagine, how I lament that he had not patience to wait sixteen months, before he sold his pictures !

I am very sorry you have been at all indisposed. I will take the utmost care of your 59th volume (for which I give you this receipt), and will restore it the instant I have had time to go through it.

Witness my hand.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Feb. 9, 1781.

I HAD not time, dear sir, when I wrote last, to answer your letter, nor do more than cast an eye on your MS. To say the truth, my patience is not tough enough to go through Wolsey's negotiations. I see that *your* perseverance was forced to make the utmost efforts to transcribe them. They are immeasurably verbose, not to mention the blunders of the first copyist. As I read only for amusement, I cannot, so late in my life, purchase information on what I do not much care about, at the price of a great deal of *ennui*. The old wills at the end of your volume diverted me much more than the obsolete politics. I shall say nothing about what you call *your old leaven*. Every body must judge for himself in those matters: nor are you or I of an age to change long-formed opinions, as neither of us is governed by self-interest. Pray tell me how I may most safely return your volume. I value all your MSS. so much, that I should never forgive myself, if a single one came to any accident, by your so obligingly lending them to me. They are great treasures, and contain something or other that may suit most tastes: not to mention your amazing industry, neatness, legibility, with notes, arms, &c.—I know no such repositories. You will receive with your MS. Mr. Kerrick's and Mr. Gough's letters. The former is very kind. The inauguration of the *Antiquated* Society is burlesque—and so is their dearth of materials for another volume: can they ever want such rubbish as compose their preceding annals?

I think it probable, that *story* should be *stone*: however, I never piqued myself on recording every mason. I have preserved but too many that did not deserve to be mentioned. I dare to say, that when I am gone, many more such will be added to my volumes, I had not heard of poor Mr. Pennant's misfortune. I am very sorry for it, for I believe him to be a very honest good-natured man. He certainly was too lively for his proportion of understanding, and too impetuous to make the best use of what he had. However, it is a credit to us antiquaries to have one of our class disordered by vivacity.

I hope your goutiness is dissipated, and that this last fine week has set you on your feet again.

Yours most sincerely and gratefully.

P.S. Your letters were all put into the post.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 2, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

As you have not lighted on a trusty person to fetch your MS. I am unwilling to detain it longer from you, and therefore shall send my printer with it to-morrow morning to the Green Dragon, according to your directions; though I should not have ventured it in that manner, unless you yourself had warranted me. I do not know on what day the waggon sets out, but I have ordered the book to be left at Mr. Salmon's, at Cambridge, till called for.

My lady Orford ordered herself to be buried at Leghorn, the only place in Tuscany where protestants have burial. Therefore I suppose she did not affect to change. On the contrary, I believe she had no preference for any *sect*, but rather laughed at all. I know nothing new, neither in novelty nor antiquity. I have had no gout this winter, and therefore I call it my *leap-year*. I am sorry it is not yours too. It is an age since I saw Dr. Lort. I hope illness is not the cause.

You will be diverted with hearing that I am chosen an honorary member of the new Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh;¹ I accepted for two reasons. First, it is a feather that does not demand my flying thither; and secondly, to show contempt for our own old fools. To me it will be a perfect sinecure; for I have moulted all my pen feathers, and shall have no ambition of nestling into their printed transactions. Adieu, my good sir,
Your much obliged.

¹ The Royal Society of Antiquaries at Edinburgh was formed in December 1780, when the earl of Buchan was elected president. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

March 5, 1781.

You will have found by a letter that I thought you would receive yesterday, that I sent your MS. dear sir, to the Green Dragon in Bishopsgate-street, and I shall be very glad to hear that you have received it safe.

I do not in the least guess or imagine what you mean by lord Hardwicke's publication of a *Walpoliana*.¹ Naturally it should mean a collection of sayings or anecdotes of my father, according to the French *Anas*, which began, I think, with those of Menage. Or, is it a collection of letters and state-papers during his administration? I own I am curious to know at least what this piece contains. I had not heard a word of it; and, were it not for the name, I should have very little inquisitiveness about it: for nothing upon earth ever was duller than the three heavy tomes his lordship printed of sir Dudley Carleton's Negotiations, and of what he called State Papers. Pray send me an answer as soon as you can, at least of as much as you have heard about this thing.

I shall be obliged to you for a sight of the old wills you mention, but not just yet, as I should not have time to read them now, and might detain them too long.

Your MS. went to the Green Dragon on Friday night, and they said the waggon would set out the next day.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 29, 1781.

You are so good-natured that I am sure you will be glad to be told that the report of Mr. Pennant being disordered is not

¹ It was a little collection of anecdotes relative to sir Robert Walpole, made by lord Hardwicke, and privately printed by him, under the title of "*Walpoliana, or a few Anecdotes of Sir Robert Walpole,*" and is a totally different publication from the "*Walpoliana,*" which relates to the writer of this correspondence, which was compiled by Pinkerton, and published, in two small volumes, in 1799. [Ed.]

true. He is come to town—has been with me, and at least is as composed as I ever saw him. He is going to publish another part of his Welch tour, which he can well afford, though I believe he does not lose by his works. An aunt is dead exceedingly rich, who had given some thousands to him and his daughter, but suddenly changed her mind, and left all to his sister, who has most nobly given him all that had been destined in the cancelled will.

Dr. Nash¹ has just published the first volume of his Worcestershire. It is a folio of prodigious corpulence, and yet dry enough—but then it is finely dressed, and has many heads and views.

Dr. Lort was with me yesterday, and I never saw him better, nor has he been much out of order. I hope your gout has left you; but here are winds bitter enough to give one any thing.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

April 3, 1781.

I AM very sorry, dear sir, that in my last letter but one I took no notice of what you said about lord Hardwicke; the truth was I am perfectly indifferent about what he prints or publishes. There is generally a little indirect malice, but so much more dullness, that the latter soon suffocates the former. This is telling you that I could not be offended at any thing you said of him—nor am I likely to suspect a sincere friend of disobliging me. You have proved the direct contrary these forty years. I have not time to say more, but am

Ever most truly yours.

P.S. I am very sorry you have been indisposed again.

¹ Dr. Threadway Nash published, in two folio volumes, "Collections for the History of Worcester," the greater portion of the materials for which had been previously collected by sir William Habington, the poet. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 4, 1781.

I SHALL not only be ready to show Strawberry-hill, at any time he chooses, to Dr. Farmer, as your friend, but to be honoured with his acquaintance; though I am very shy now of contracting new. I have great respect for his character and abilities, and judicious taste; and am very clear that he has elucidated Shakspeare¹ in a more reasonable and satisfactory manner than any of his affected commentators, who only complimented him with learning that he had not, in order to display their own.

Pray give me timely notice whenever I am likely to see Dr. Farmer, that I may not be out of the way, when I can have an opportunity of showing attention to a friend of yours, and pay a small part of your gratitude to him. There shall be a bed at his service; for you know Strawberry cannot be seen in a moment; nor are Englishmen so *liants* as to get acquainted in the time they are walking through a house.

But now, my good sir, how could you suffer your prejudiced partiality to me, to run away with you so extravagantly, as to call me one of the greatest characters of the age? You are too honest to flatter, too much a hermit to be interested, and I am too powerless and insignificant to be an object of court, were you capable of paying it from mercenary views. I know then that it could proceed from nothing but the warmth of your heart.—But if you are blind towards me, I am not so to myself. I know not how others feel on such occasions; but if any one happens to praise me, all my faults rush into my face, and make me turn my eyes inward and outward with horror. What am I but a poor old skeleton tottering towards the grave, and conscious of ten thousand weaknesses, follies, and worse! and, for talents,

¹ In his “Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare,” by far the most interesting of all the innumerable essays to which the writings of Shakspeare have given rise. The “Illustrations of Shakspeare,” by the late Francis Douce, esq., must be looked upon, notwithstanding the sneers of the Edinburgh Review, as of nearly equal value. Both illustrate their subject from the only true source of illustration—the works of Shakspeare’s predecessors of contemporaries. [Ed.]

what are mine, but trifling and superficial; and, compared with those of men of real genius, most diminutive! Mine a great character! mercy on me! I am a composition of Anthony Wood and madame Danois,² and I know not what trumpery writers. This is the least I can say to refute your panegyric, which I shall burn presently; for I will not have such an encomiastic letter found in my possession, lest I should seem to have been pleased with it. I enjoin you, as a penance, not to contradict one tittle I have said here; for I am not begging more compliments, and shall take it seriously ill, if you ever pay me another. We have been friends above forty years; I am satisfied of your sincerity and affection—but does it become us at past threescore each, to be saying fine things to one another?—Consider how soon we shall be nothing.

I assure you, with great truth, I am at this present very sick of my little vapour of fame. My tragedy³ has wandered into the hands of some banditti booksellers; and I am forced to publish it myself to prevent piracy. All I can do is to condemn it myself; and that I shall.

I am reading Mr. Pennant's new Welch tour; he has pleased me by making very handsome mention of you.—But I will not do what I have been blaming.

My poor dear madame du Deffand's little dog is arrived. She made me promise to take care of it the last time I saw her; that I will most religiously, and make it as happy as is possible. I have not much curiosity to see your Cambridge Raphael, but great desire to see you, and will certainly this summer accept your invitation, which I take much kinder than your *great character*, though both flowed from the same friendship. Mine for you is exactly what it has been ever since you knew (and few men can boast so uninterrupted a friendship as yours and that of)

P.S. I have seen the Monthly Review.

² Madame D'Aulnoy, the contemporary of Perrault, and, like him, a writer of fairy tales. She was the authoress of "The Lady's Travels in Spain," and many other works, which have been translated into English. [Ed.]

³ "The Mysterious Mother." He had printed fifty copies at Strawberry-hill as early as 1765; but a surreptitious edition of it being announced in 1781, he consented to Dodsley's publishing a genuine one. [Ed.]

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sunday evening, May 6, 1781.

I SUPPED with your countess on Friday at lord Frederick Campbell's, where I heard of the relief of Gibraltar by Darby. The Spanish fleet kept close in Cadiz:—however, he lifted up his leg, and just squirted contempt on them. As he is embarrassed of his transports, I suppose their ships will scramble on shore rather than fight. Well, I shall be perfectly content with our fleet coming back in a whole skin. It will be enough to have outquixoted Don Quixote's own nation. As I knew your countess would write the next day, I waited till she was gone out of town and would not have much to tell you—not that I have either; and it is giving myself an air, to pretend to know more at Twickenham than she can at Henley. Though it is a bitter north-east, I came hither to-day to look at my lilacs, though *à la glace*, and to get from Pharoah, for which there is a rage. I doted on it above thirty years ago; but it is not decent to sit up all night now with boys and girls. * * * *, the banker *à la mode*, has been demolished. He and his associate sir * * * * * went early t'other night to Brookes's, before Charles Fox and Fitzpatrick, who keep a bank there, were come. But they soon arrived, attacked their rivals, broke their bank, and won above 4,000*l*. “There,” said Fox, “so should all usurpers be served!”—He did still better; for he sent for his tradesmen, and paid as far as the money would go. In the mornings he continues his war on lord North—but cannot break *that* bank. The court has carried a secret committee for India affairs—and it is supposed that Rumbold is to be the sacrifice:—but as he is near as rich as lord Clive, I conclude he will escape by the same golden key.

I told you in my last, that Tonton¹ was arrived. I brought him this morning to take possession of his new villa; but his inauguration has not been at all pacific. As he has already found out that he may be as despotic as at St. Joseph's, he began with exiling my beautiful little cat;—upon which, however, we shall not quite agree. He then flew at one of my dogs,

¹ Madame du Deffand's dog, which she left by will to Mr. Walpole. [Or.]

who returned it, by biting his foot till it bled; but was severely beaten for it. I immediately rung for Margaret² to dress his foot; but in the midst of my tribulation could not keep my countenance; for she cried, "Poor little thing, he does not understand my language!"—I hope she will not recollect too that he is a Papist!

Berkeley-square, Tuesday, May 8.

I CAME before dinner, and find your long letter of the 3d. You have mistaken Tonton's sex, who is a cavalier, and a little of the *mousquetaire* still; but if I do not correct his vivacities, at least I shall not encourage them like my dear old friend.

You say nothing of your health: therefore, I trust, it is quite re-established. My own is most flourishing for me.

They say the parliament will rise by the birth-day—not that it seems to be any grievance or confinement to any body. I hope you will soon come³ and enjoy a quiet summer under the laurels of your own conscience. They are at least as spreading as any body's else; and the soil will preserve their verdure for ever. Methinks we western powers might as well make peace, since we make war so clumsily.—Yet I doubt the awkwardness of our enemies will not have brought down our stomach. Well, I wish for the sake of mankind there was an end of their sufferings! Even spectators are not amused—the whole war has passed like the riotous murmurs of the upper gallery before the play begins—they have pelted the candle-snuffers, the stage has been swept, the music has played, people have taken their places—but the deuce a bit of any performance!—And when folks go home, they will have seen nothing but a farce, that has cost fifty times more than the best tragedy!

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, May [June] 16, 1781.

YOUR last account of yourself was so indifferent, that I am impatient for a better: pray send me a much better.

² Mr. Walpole's house-keeper. [Or.]

³ From Jersey. [Or.]

I know little in your way but that sir Richard Worsley¹ has just published a History of the Isle of Wight, with many views poorly done enough. Mr. Bull is honouring me, at least my Anecdotes of Painting, exceedingly. He has let every page into a pompous sheet, and is adding every print of portrait, building, &c. that I mention, and that he can get, and specimens of all our engravers. It will make eight magnificent folios, and be a most valuable body of our arts. Nichols the printer has published a new Life of Hogarth² of near two hundred pages—many more, in truth, than it required—chiefly it is *the life* of his works, containing all the variations, and notices of any persons whom he had in view. I cannot say there are discoveries of many prints which I have not mentioned, though I hear Mr. Gulston says he has fifteen such; but I suppose he only fancies so. Mr. Nichols says our printsellers are already adding Hogarth's name to several spurious. Mr. Stevens, I hear, has been allowed to ransack Mrs. Hogarth's house for obsolete and unfinished plates, which are to be completed and published. Though she was not pleased with my account of her husband, and seems by these transactions to have encouraged the second, I assure you I have much more reason to be satisfied than she has, the editor or editors being much civiler to living me than to dead Hogarth—yet I should not have complained. Every body has the same right to speak their sentiments. Nay, in general I have gentler treatment than I expected, and I think the world and I part good friends.

I am now setting about the completion of my Odes Strawberryland. A painter is to come hither on Monday to make a drawing of the Tribune, and finish T. Sandby's fine view of the gallery, to which I could never get him to put the last hand. They will then be engraved with a few of the chimney-pieces, which will complete the plates. I must add an appendix of curiosities, purchased or acquired since the catalogue was

¹ Sir Richard Worsley is far better known by his splendid work, the "Museum Worsleyanum," in two volumes, folio, none of which were ever sold during his life. The expenses attending this splendid publication, including the author's Travels, are said to have amounted to twenty-seven thousand pounds. [Ed.]

² Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth; and a Catalogue of his Works, chronologically arranged; with occasional Remarks. London, 1781. 8vo. [Ed.]

printed. This will be awkward, but I cannot afford to throw away an hundred copies. I shall take care if I can that Mr. Gough does not get fresh intelligence from my engravers, or he will advertize my supplement, before the book appears. I do not think it was very civil to publish such private intelligence, to which he had no right, without my leave; but every body seems to think he may do what is good in his own eyes. I saw the other day, in a collection of seats (exquisitely engraved) a very rude insult on the duke of Devonshire. The designer went to draw a view of Chiswick, without asking leave, and was—not hindered, for he has given it; but he says he was treated *illiberally*, the house not being shown without tickets, which he not only censures, but calls a singularity, though a frequent practice in other places, and practised *there* to my knowledge for these thirty years—so every body is to come into your house, if he pleases, draw it whether you please or not, and by the same rule, I suppose, put any thing into his pockets that he likes. I do know by experience, what a grievance it is to have a house worth being seen, and though I submit in consequence to great inconveniences, they do not save me from many rudenesses. Mr. Southcote was forced to shut up his garden, for the savages who came as connoisseurs scribbled a thousand brutalities, in the buildings, upon his religion. I myself, at Canons, saw a beautiful table of oriental alabaster that had been split in two, by a buck in boots jumping up backwards to sit upon it.

I have the oaken head of Henry III. over the middle arch of the armoury. Pray tell me what the church of Barnwell, near Oundle, was, which his majesty endowed, and whence his head came.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, May 28, 1781.

THIS letter, like an embarkation, will not set out till it has gotten its complement; but I begin it, as I have just received your second letter. I wrote to you two days ago, and did not mean to complain; for you certainly cannot have variety of

matter in your sequestered isle : and since you do not disdain trifling news, this good town, that furnishes nothing else, at least produces weeds, which shoot up in spite of the *Scotch thistles*, that have choked all good fruits. I do not know what lady C * * * designs to do with her play ; I hope, act it only in private ; for her other was murdered, and the audience did not exert the least gallantry to so pretty an authoress, though she gave them so fair an opportunity. For my own play, I was going to publish it in my own defence, as a spurious edition was advertised here, besides one in Ireland.—My advertisement has overlaid the former for the present, and that tempts me to suppress mine, as I have a thorough aversion to its appearance. Still I think I shall produce it in the dead of summer, that it may be forgotten by winter ; for I could not bear having it the subject of conversation in a full town. It is printed ; so I can let it steal out in the midst of the first event that engrosses the public ; and as it is not quite a novelty, I have no fear but it will be still-born, if it is twin with any babe that squalls and makes much noise. —At the same time with yours I received a letter from another cousin at Paris, who tells me Necker is on the verge, and in the postscript says, he has actually resigned. I heard so a few days ago ; but this is a full confirmation. Do you remember a conversation at your house, at supper, in which a friend of yours spoke very unfavourably of Necker,¹ and seemed to wish his fall ? In my own opinion, they are much in the wrong. It is true, Necker laboured with all his shoulders to restore their finances ; yet I am persuaded that his attention to that great object made him clog all their military operations. They will pay dearer for money ; but money they will have—nor is it so dear to them ; for, when they have gotten it, they have only not to pay. A monsieur Joly de Fleury is comptroller-general. I know nothing of him—but as they change so often, some able man will prove minister at last—and there they will have the advantage again.

Lord Cornwallis's courier, Mr. Broderic, is not yet arrived ; so you are a little precipitate in thinking America so much nearer

¹ Necker was compelled to retire, from the opposition which those interested in maintaining the lavish expenditure of the French government offered to the system of rigorous economy which he endeavoured to introduce. [Ed.]

to being subdued, which you have often swallowed up as if you were a minister; and yet, methinks, that era has been so frequently put off, that I wonder you are not cured of being sanguine—or rather, of believing the magnificent lies that every trifling advantage gives birth to. If a quarter of the Americans had joined the royalists that have been said to join, all the colonies would not hold them. But, at least, they have been like the trick of kings and queens at cards; where one of two goes back every turn to fetch another. However, this is only for conversation for the moment. With such aversion to disputation, I have no zeal for making converts to my own opinion, not even on points that touch me nearer.

Thursday, May 31.

If you see the papers, you will find that there was a warm debate yesterday on a fresh proposal from Harley for pacification with America; in which the ministers were roundly reproached with their boasts of the returning zeal of the colonies; and which, though it ought by their own accounts to be so much nearer complete, they could not maintain to be at all effectual; though even yesterday a report was revived of a second victory of lord Cornwallis. This debate prevented another on the marriage bill, which Charles Fox wants to get repealed, and which he told me he was going to labour. I mention this from the circumstance of the moment when he told me so. I had been to see if lady A * * * * was come to town: as I came up St. James's-street, I saw a cart and porters at C * * * 's door; coppers and old chests of drawers loading.—In short, his success at faro has awakened his host of creditors—but, unless his bank had swelled to the size of the bank of England, it could not have yielded a sop a-piece for each. Epsom, too, had been unpropitious—and one creditor has actually seized and carried off his goods, which did not seem worth removing. As I returned full of this scene, whom should I find sauntering by my own door but C.? He came up and talked to me at the coach-window, on the marriage bill, with as much *sang froid* as if he knew nothing of what had happened.—I have no admiration for insensibility to one's own faults, especially when committed out of vanity. Perhaps the whole philosophy consisted in the commission. If *you* could have been as much to blame, the last thing you would bear well

would be your own reflections. The more marvellous Fox's parts are, the more one is provoked at his follies, which comfort so many rascals and blockheads ; and make all that is admirable and amiable in him only matter of regret to those who like him as I do.

I did intend to settle at Strawberry on Sunday ; but must return on Thursday, for a party made at Marlborough-house for princess Amelia. I am continually tempted to retire entirely—and should—if I did not see how very unfit English tempers are for living quite out of the world. We grow abominably peevish and severe on others, if we are not constantly rubbed against and polished by them. I need not name friends and relations of yours and mine as instances. My prophecy on the short reign of faro is verified already. The bankers find that all the calculated advantages of the game do not balance pinchbeck *parolis* and debts of honourable women. The bankers, I think, might have had a previous and more generous reason, the very bad air of holding a bank:—but this country is as hardened against the *petite morale*, as against the greater.—What should I think of the world if I quitted it entirely ?

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 3, 1781.

You know I have more philosophy about *you* than courage ; yet for once I have been very brave. There was an article in the papers last week that said, a letter from Jersey mentioned apprehensions of being attacked by 4,000 French.—Do you know that I treated the paragraph with scorn?—No, no : I am not afraid for your island, when you are at home in it, and have had time to fortify it, and have sufficient force. No, no : it will not be surprised when you are there, and when our fleet is returned, and Digby before Brest. However, with all my valour, I could not help going to your brother to ask a few questions—but he had heard of no such letter. The French would be foolish indeed if they ran their heads a third time against your rocks, when watched by the most vigilant of all governors. Your nephew G * * * is arrived with the fleet : my

door opened t'other morning; I looked towards the common horizon of heads, but was a foot and a half below any face. The handsomest giant in the world made but one step cross my room; and, seizing my hand, gave it such a robust gripe, that I squalled; for he crushed my poor chalk-stones to powder. When I had recovered from the pain of his friendly salute, I said, "It must be G * * * * C * * * * : and yet is it possible? Why, it is not fifteen months ago since you was but six feet high." In a word, he is within an inch of Robert and Edward, with larger limbs, almost as handsome as Hugh, with all the bloom of youth; and—in short, another of those comely sons of Anak, the breed of which your brother and lady Hertford have piously restored for the comfort of the daughters of Sion. He is delighted with having tapped his warfare with the siege of Gibraltar, and burns to stride to America. The town, he says, is totally destroyed; and between two and three hundred persons killed.—Well! it is pity lady Hertford has done breeding: we shall want such a race to re-people even the ruins we do not lose! The rising generation does give one some hopes. I confine myself to some of this year's birds. The young William Pitt¹ has again displayed paternal oratory. The other day, on the commission of accounts, he answered lord North, and tore him limb from limb. If Charles Fox could feel, one should think such a rival, with an unspotted character, would rouse him — What, if a Pitt and Fox should again be rivals!—A still newer orator has appeared in the India business, a Mr. Banks, and against lord North too—and with a merit, that the very last crop of orators left out of their rubric—modesty. As young Pitt is modest too, one would hope some genuine English may revive!

Tuesday, June 5.

THIS is the season of opening my cake-house. I have chosen a bad spot, if I meant to retire; and calculated ill, when I made it a puppet-show.

Last week we had two or three mastiff-days; for they were fiercer than our common dog-days. It is cooled again; but rain

¹ William Pitt, afterwards, for so long a period, the prime minister of England, and, as Walpole anticipated, the proud rival of Charles Fox, had delivered his maiden speech this session, in favour of Mr. Burke's reform bill. [Ed.]

is as great a rarity as in Egypt; and father Thames is so far from being a Nile, that he is dying for thirst himself. But it would be prudent to reserve paragraphs of weather till people are gone out of town; for then I can have little to send you else from hence.

Berkeley-square, June 6.

As soon as I came to town to-day, Le Texier called on me, and told me he has miscarried of Pygmalion. The expense would have mounted to 150*l.*, and he could get but sixty subscribers at a guinea a-piece. I am glad his experience and success has taught him thrift—I did not expect it. Sheridan had a heavier miscarriage last night. The two Vestris had imagined a fête; and, concluding that whatever they designed would captivate the town and its purses, were at the expense of 1,200*l.* and distributing tickets at two guineas a-piece, disposed of not two hundred. It ended in a bad opera, that began three hours later than usual, and at quadruple the price. There were bushels of dead flowers, lamps, country dances,—and a cold supper——Yet they are not abused as poor Le Texier was last year.

June 8.

I CONCLUDE my letter, and I hope our present correspondence, very agreeably; for your brother told me last night, that you have written to lord Hillsborough for leave to return. If all our governors could leave their dominions in as good plight, it were lucky. Your brother owned, what the Gazette with all its circumstances cannot conceal, that lord Cornwallis's triumphs have but increased our losses, without leaving any hopes. I am told that his army, which when he parted from Clinton amounted to 17,000 men, does not now contain above as many hundred, except the detachments. The Gazette, to my sorrow and your greater sorrow, speaks of colonel O'Hara having received two dangerous wounds.

Princess Amelia was at Marlborough-house last night, and played at faro till twelve o'clock—There ends the winter campaign!—I go to Strawberry-hill to-morrow; and I hope, *à l'Irlandoise*, that the next letter I write to you—will be not to write to you any more.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 13, 1781.

IT was very kind, my dear lord, to recollect me so soon: I wish I could return it by amusing you; but here I know nothing, and suppose it is owing to age that even in town I do not find the transactions of the world very entertaining. One must sit up all night to see or hear any thing—and if the town intends to do any thing, they never begin to do it till next day.

Mr. Conway will certainly be here the end of this month, having thoroughly secured his island from surprise, and it is not liable to be taken any other way. I wish he was governor of this bigger one too, which does not seem quite so well guaranteed.

Your lordship will wonder at a visit I had yesterday: it was from Mr. * * * * *, who has passed a day and night here. It was not from my being a fellow-scholar of Vestris, but from his being turned antiquary; the last patina I should have thought a Macaroni would have taken. I am as proud of such a disciple as of having converted Dicky Bateman from a Chinese to a Goth. Though he was the founder of the Sharawadgi taste in England, I preached so effectually that his every pagoda took the veil. The methodists say, one must have been very wicked before one can be of the elect—yet is that extreme more distant from *the ton*, which avows knowing and liking nothing but the fashion of the instant, to studying what were the modes of five hundred years ago? I hope this conversion will not ruin Mr. * * * * *’s fortune under the lord lieutenant of Ireland. How his Irish majesty will be shocked when he asks how large prince B * * * * *’s shoe-buckles are grown, to be answered, he does not know, but that Charles Brandon’s * * * at the last birthday had three yards of velvet in it! and that the duchess of Buckingham thrust out her chin two inches farther than ever in admiration of it! and that the marchioness of Dorset had put out her jaw by endeavouring to imitate her!

We have at last had some rains, which I hope extended to Yorkshire, and that your lordship has found Wentworth-castle in the bloom of verdure. I always, as in duty bound, wish prosperity to every body and every thing there, and am

Your lordship’s ever devoted.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 5, 1781.

My good sir, you forget that I have a cousin, eldest son of lord Walpole, and of a marriageable age, who has the same Christian name as I.¹ The miss Churchill he has married is my niece, second daughter of my sister, lady Mary Churchill, so that if I were in my dotage, I must have looked out for another bride—in short, I hope you will have no occasion to wish me joy of any egregious folly. I do congratulate you on your better health, and on the duke of Rutland's civilities to you. I am a little surprised at his brother, who is a seaman, having a propensity to divinity, and wonder you object to it; the church navigant would be an extension of its power. As to *orthodoxy*, excuse me, if I think it means nothing at all but every man's own opinion.² Were every man to define his faith, I am persuaded that no two men are or ever were exactly of the same opinion in *all* points; and as men are more angry at others for differing with them on a single point, than satisfied with their concurrence in all others, each would deem every body else a heretic. Old or new opinions are exactly of the same authority, for every opinion must have been new when first started; and no man has nor ever had more right than another to dictate, unless inspired. St. Peter and St. Paul disagreed from the earliest time, and who can be sure which was in the right? and if one of the apostles was in the wrong, who may not be mistaken? When you will tell me which was the orthodox, and which the heterodox apostle, I will allow that you know what orthodoxy is. You and I are perhaps the two persons who agree the best with very different ways of thinking—and perhaps the reason is, that we have a mutual esteem for each other's sincerity, and from an experience of more than forty years, are persuaded that neither of us has any interested views. For my own part, I confess

¹ Horatio, son of Horatio, second lord Walpole (who was created earl of Orford 1st April 1806), and who succeeded as the second earl in 1809, married, 27th June 1781, Sophia, daughter of Charles Churchill, esq. [Ed.]

² Byron had surely seen this observation of his brother peer, when he wrote his definition of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in Don Juan. [Ed.]

honestly that I am far from having the same charity for those whom I suspect of mercenary views. If Dr. Butler,² when a private clergyman, wrote Whig pamphlets, and when bishop of Oxford preaches Tory sermons, I should not tell him that he does not know what orthodoxy is, but I am convinced he does not care what it is. The duke of Rutland seems much more liberal than Butler, or I, when he is so civil to you, though you voted against his brother. I am not acquainted with his grace, but I respect his behaviour; he is above prejudices.

The story of poor Mr. Cotton is shocking, whichever way it happened, but most probably it was accident.

I am ashamed at the price of my book, though not my fault; but I have so often been guilty myself of giving ridiculous prices for rarities, though of no intrinsic value, that I must not condemn the same folly in others. Every thing tells me how silly I am! I pretend to reason and yet am a virtuoso!—Why should I presume that at sixty-four I am too wise to marry?—and was you, who know so many of my weaknesses, in the wrong to suspect me of one more? Oh! no, my good friend: nor do I see any thing in your belief of it, but the kindness with which you wish me felicity on the occasion. I heartily thank you for it, and am

Most cordially yours.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 26, 1781.

I WILL not delay thanking you, dear sir, for a second letter, which you wrote out of kindness, though I have time but to say a word, having my house full of company. I think I have somewhere or other mentioned the *Robertus Comentarius* (probably on some former information from you which you never forget to give me), at least the name sounds familiar to me—but just now I cannot consult my papers or books from the impediment of my

² Dr. John Butler was consecrated bishop of Oxford in May 1777, in the room of Dr. Lowth, translated to London. In 1788 he was translated to Hereford. The Letters of Junius have been erroneously attributed to Dr. Butler. [Ed.]

guests. As I am actually preparing a new edition of my anecdotes, I shall very soon have occasion to search.

I am sorry to hear you complain of the gout, but trust it will be a short parenthesis.

Yours most gratefully.

To the EARL of STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 31, 1781.

YOUR lordship's too friendly partiality sees talents in me which I am sure I do not possess. With all my desire of amusing you, and with all my sense of gratitude for your long and unalterable goodness, it is quite impossible to send you an entertaining letter from hence. The insipidity of my life, that is passed with a few old people that are wearing out like myself, after surviving so many of my acquaintance, can furnish no matter of correspondence. What few novelties I hear, come stale, and not till they have been hashed in the newspapers; and though we are engaged in such big and wide wars, they produce no striking events, nor furnish any thing but regrets for the lives and millions we fling away to no purpose! One cannot divert when one can only compute; nor extract entertainment from prophecies that there is no reason to colour favourably. We have indeed foretold success for seven years together, but debts and taxes have been the sole completion.

If one turns to private life, what is there to furnish pleasing topics? Dissipation without object, pleasure, or genius, is the only colour of the times. One hears every day of somebody undone, but can we or they tell how, except when it is by the most expeditious of all means, gaming? And now, even the loss of an hundred thousand pounds is not rare enough to be surprising. One may stare or growl, but cannot relate any thing that is worth hearing. I do not love to censure a younger age; but in good truth they neither amuse me nor enable me to amuse others.

The pleasantest event I know, happened to myself last Sunday morning, when general Conway, very unexpectedly, walked in as I was at breakfast, in his way to Park-place. He looks as well in health and spirits as ever I saw him; and though

he staid but half an hour, I was perfectly content, as he is at home.

I am glad your lordship likes the fourth book of the Garden,¹ which is admirably coloured. The version of Fresnoy² I think the finest translation I ever saw. It is a most beautiful poem extracted from as dry and prosaic a parcel of verses as could be put together: Mr. Mason has gilded lead, and burnished it highly. Lord and lady Harcourt I should think would make him a visit, and I hope for their sakes will visit Wentworth-castle. As they both have taste, I should be sorry they did not see the perfectest specimen of architecture I know.

Mrs. Damer certainly goes abroad this winter. I am glad of it for every reason but her absence. I am certain it will be essential to her health; and she has so eminently a classic genius, and is herself so superior an artist, that I enjoy the pleasure she will have in visiting Italy.

As your lordship has honoured all the productions of my press with your acceptance, I venture to enclose the last, which I printed to oblige the L * * * * s. There are many beautiful and poetic expressions in it. A wedding to be sure is neither a new nor a promising subject, nor will outlast the favours: still I think Mr. Jones's ode is uncommonly good for the occasion;³ at least, if it does not much charm lady Strafford and your lordship, I know you will receive it kindly as a tribute from Strawberry-hill, as every homage is due to you both from its master.

Your devoted humble servant.

¹ "The English Garden," a poem, in four books, by Mason, of which an edition was published in 1785, with a Commentary and Notes, by W. Burgh, LL.D. [Ed.]

² Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy, a celebrated French painter and poet, who wrote a poem, "De Arte Graphicâ," published after his death. It was first translated by Dryden, and then by Mason, whose version was enriched with some valuable notes, contributed by sir Joshua Reynolds. [Ed.]

³ The marriage of lord Althorp with miss Bingham. [Or.]

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, September 16, 1781.

I AM not surprised that such a mind as yours cannot help expressing gratitude: it would not be your mind, if it could command that sensation as triumphantly as it does your passions. Only remember that the expression is unnecessary. I do know that you feel the entire friendship I have for you; nor should I love you so well if I was not persuaded of it. There never was a grain of any thing romantic in my friendship for you. We loved one another from children, and as so near relations; but my friendship grew up with your virtues, which I admired though I did not imitate. We had scarce one in common but disinterestedness. Of the reverse we have both, I may say, been so absolutely clear, that there is nothing so natural and easy as the little moneyed transactions between us; and therefore knowing how perfectly indifferent I am upon that head, and remembering the papers I showed you, and what I said to you when I saw you last, I am sure you will have the complaisance never to mention thanks more.—Now, to answer your questions.

As to coming to you, as that *feu gregeois* lord George Gordon has given up the election, to my great joy, I can come to you on Sunday next. It is true, I had rather you visited your regiment first, for this reason: I expect a summons to Nuneham every day; and besides, having never loved two journeys instead of one, I grow more covetous of my time, as I have little left, and therefore had rather take Park-place, going and coming, on my way to lord Harcourt.

I don't know a word of news, public or private. I am deep in my dear old friend's papers.¹ There are some very delectable; and though I believe, nay know, I have not quite all, there are many which I almost wonder, after the little delicacy they² have shown, ever arrived to my hands. I dare to say they will not be

¹ Madame du Deffand, who died in September 1781, and left all her papers to Mr. Walpole. [Or.]

² The executors of madame du Deffand. [Or.] Walpole suspected that the prince de Beauveau, whom madame du Deffand had, by will, permitted to make copies of any such papers as he wished, had extended this privilege to the retaining some of them in his own possession. [Ed.]

quite so just to the public; for though I consented that the correspondence with Voltaire should be given to the editors of his works, I am persuaded that there are many passages at least which they will suppress, as very contemptuous to his chief votaries—I mean of the votaries to his sentiments—for, like other heresiarchs, he despised his tools. If I live to see the edition, it will divert me to collate it with what I have in my hands.

You are the person in the world the fittest to encounter the meeting you mention for the choice of a bridge.³ You have temper and patience enough to bear with fools and false taste. I, so unlike you, have learned some patience with both sorts, too, but by a more summary method than by waiting to instil reason into them. Mine is only by leaving them to their own vagaries, and by despairing that sense and taste should ever extend themselves. Adieu!

P.S. In Voltaire's letters are some bitter traits on the king of Prussia, which, as he is defender of their no faith, I conclude will be *rayés*, too.

TO MR. NICHOLS.¹

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 31, 1781.

I AM glad to hear, sir, that your account of Hogarth² calls for another edition; and I am very sensible of your great civility in offering to change any passages that criticise my own work. Though I am much obliged by the offer, I should blush to myself if I even wished for that complaisance. Good God! sir, what am I, that I should be offended at or above criticism or correction? I do not know who ought to be—I am sure, no author. I am a private man, of no consequence, and at best an author of very moderate abilities. In a work that comprehends so much biography as my *Anecdotes of Painting*, it would have been impossible, even with much more diligence than I employed,

³ The bridge over the Thames at Henley. [Or.]

¹ The well-known bookseller and antiquary. [Or.]

² With which Mr. Nichols had presented Mr. Walpole. [Or.]

not to make numberless mistakes. It is kind to me to point out those errors; to the world it is justice. Nor have I reason to be displeased even with the manner. I do remember that in many passages you have been very civil to me. I do not recollect any harsh phrases. As my work is partly critical as well as biographic, there, too, I had no reason or right to expect deference to my opinions. Criticism, I doubt, has no very certain rule to go by; in matters of taste it is a still more vague and arbitrary science.

As I am very sincere, sir, in what I say, I will with the same integrity own, that in one or two places of your book I think the criticisms on me are not well founded. For instance: in p. 37 I am told that Hogarth did not deserve the compliment I pay him of not descending to the indelicacy of the Flemish and Dutch painters. It is very true that you have produced some instances, to which I had not adverted, where he has been guilty of the same fault, though I think not in all you allege, nor to the degree alleged: in some I think the humour compensates for the indelicacy, which is never the case with the Dutch; and in one particular I think it is a merit; I mean in the burlesque Paul before Felix; for there, sir, you should recollect that Hogarth himself meant to satirize, not imitate the painters of Holland and Flanders.

You have also instanced, sir, many more portraits in his satiric prints than come within my defence of him, as not being a personal satirist; but in those too, with submission, I think you have gone too far; as, though you have cited portraits, are they all satiric? Sir John Gouson is the image of an active magistrate identified; but it is not ridiculous, unless to be an active magistrate is being ridiculous. Mr. Pine,³ I think you allow, desired to sit for the fat friar in the Gates of Calais—certainly not with a view to being turned into derision.

With regard to the bloody fingers of Sigismunda, you say, sir, that my memory must have failed me, as you affirm that they *are* unstained with blood. Forgive me if I say that I am

³ John Pine, the artist, who published "The Procession and Ceremonies at the Installation of the Knights of the Bath, 17th June 1725," folio, 1730; and, in 1739, "The Tapestry Hangings of the House of Lords," &c. sat, as Walpole observes, for the Fat Friar in Hogarth's Gates of Calais, and received from that circumstance the name of "Friar Pine," which he retained until his death. [Ed.]

positive they were so originally. I saw them so, and have often mentioned that fact. Recollect, sir, that you yourself allow, p. 46, in the note, that the picture was continually *altered, upon the criticism of one connoisseur or another*. May not my memory be more faithful about so striking a circumstance than the memory of another who would engage to recollect all the changes that remarkable picture underwent?

I should be very happy, sir, if I could contribute any additional lights to your new publication; indeed, what additional lights I have gained are from your work, which has furnished me with many. I am going to publish a new edition of all the five volumes of my *Anecdotes of Painting*, in which I shall certainly insert what I have gathered from you. This edition will be in five thin octavos, without cuts, to make the purchase easy to artists and such as cannot afford the quartos, which are grown so extravagantly dear, that I am ashamed of it. Being published too at different periods, and being many of them cut to pieces for the heads, since the rage for portraits has been carried so far, it is very rare to meet with a complete set. My corrected copy is now in the printer's hands, except the last volume, in which are my additions to Hogarth from your list, and perhaps one or two more; but that volume also I have left in town, though not at the printer's, as, to complete it, I must wait for his new works, which Mrs. Hogarth is to publish.

When I am settled in town, sir, I shall be very ready, if you please to call on me in Berkeley-square, to communicate any additions I have made to my account of Hogarth. One or two trifles I have inserted in the margin of your account, which I will now mention, though scarcely worth your adopting.

P. 84 of yours. It is impossible Henry VIII. and Anna Boleyn could be meant for portraits of the late prince and miss Vane. The stature and faces of both are totally unlike. You ask, sir, where the picture is or was? It was at Vauxhall, in the portico of the old great room, on the right hand as you enter the garden. I remember it there.

P. 147, last line. There never was a *duke* of Kendal, but an infant son of James II. The arms engraved were certainly those of the *duchess* of Kendal, and the same with those I have in a lozenge. It must have been a mistake if written duke, or in a male shield.

P. 148. The print of Monticelli,⁴ Cuzzoni,⁵ and Heydegger,⁶ if etched by him, was not designed by him, but the last countess

⁴ Angelo Maria Monticelli, born at Milan about 1715, and who came to London about the year 1746, from Dresden, where he had been singing with the celebrated Mingotti. [Ed.]

⁵ Francesca Cuzzoni Sandoni, generally called Cuzzoni, the favourite female singer of her day in England, until her quarrel with Handel, who patronized her rival Faustina, upon which she left England, returned in 1748, but then, somewhat advanced in years, excited little interest. She was celebrated for the song of "Falsa imagine" in *Otho*, which Handel had composed expressly for her, but which she at first refused to sing, until the composer seized her by the waist, threw up the sash, and threatened to throw the refractory signora out of the window; telling her, "that he always knew she was a very devil, but he should let her know, in her turn, that he was Beelzebub, prince of the devils." [Ed.]

⁶ John James Heidegger, a Swiss by birth, who was for many years manager of the Opera, in the Haymarket, and master of the revels to George II., and *Arbiter Elegantiarum* of the day. He was celebrated for his humour and his ugliness; for it might be said of him as Madame de Sevigné said of the duc de Roquelaure, "he abused the privilege which men had to be ugly." This latter quality led to a curious trick which was played off against him by the duke of Montagu. Heidegger had raised masquerades into great repute in this country; and a few days previously to one at which George II. was to be present, he was invited to an entertainment by the duke, who contrived to make him so intoxicated, that he fell asleep, and afforded an opportunity to an artist, who was in readiness, to take a cast of his face. From this a mask was made, which was worn on the evening of the masquerade by a person tutored for the purpose, and who was dressed in a habit the fac-simile of Heidegger's, whose valet had been bribed to tell what his master's dress was to be. As soon as the king was seated, who was always known to the conductor of the entertainment, though concealed by his domino from the rest of the company, Heidegger ordered the band to strike up "*God save the King*." No sooner had he left the orchestra than his double made his appearance, and ordered "*Charlie over the Water*," the jacobin tune. Heidegger, in a rage, returned to the musicians' gallery, and ordered "*God save the King*," which was played as long as he remained there. As soon as he left, his double re-appeared, and re-commanded "*Charlie over the Water*." Some of the officers of the Guards were now for kicking out the musicians; but the duke of Cumberland, who relished the jest, prevented them. Heidegger again flew to the gallery, where he was encountered by the duke of Montagu, who told him the king was seriously enraged, and advised him to offer an instant apology. The duke commanded the double to do the same. So that no sooner had Heidegger apologized to the king, who was well amused, for the insolence of his musicians, than the false Heidegger advanced, and in a plaintive voice, exclaimed: "*Indeed, sire, it was not my fault, but that devil's in my likeness*."

of Burlington; nor is it Monticelli, but Farinelli:⁷ Monticelli was not in England till many years after the Cuzzoni.

I do not at present recollect any thing more that can be of use to you; and am, sir,

Your obliged and obedient humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Sunday morning, Nov. 18, 1781.

I HAVE been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it, it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have any thing more to do with theatres. Indeed it has seemed strange to me, who for these three or four years have not been so many times in a play-house, nor knew six of the actors by sight, to be at two rehearsals, behind the scenes, in the green-room, and acquainted with half the company. The Count of Narbonne¹ was played last night with great applause, and without a single murmur of disapprobation. Miss Young has charmed me. She played with intelligence that was quite surprising. The applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on. I am sure you will be pleased with the conduct and the easy beautiful language of the play, and struck with her acting.

Poor Heidegger was dumb-founded, and only recovered his self-possession when the duke whispered to him the plot, and ordered the counterfeit to remove his mask. [Ed.]

⁷ Farinelli, called Carlo Broschi, a most extraordinary musician, and a most estimable man, arrived in England in 1734, where he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. One lady, upon hearing his admirable singing, exclaimed, with more of fervent delight than of either piety or propriety, "One God, one Farinelli." [Ed.]

¹ One of several tragedies written by Robert Jephson, esq., many years master of the horse to the lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Many of his letters, addressed to Garrick, will be found in "The Garrick Correspondence." [Ed.]

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 27, 1781.

EACH fresh mark of your lordship's kindness and friendship calls on me for thanks and an answer : every other reason would enjoin me silence. I not only grow so old, but the symptoms of age increase so fast, that, as they advise me to keep out of the world, that retirement makes me less fit to be informing or entertaining. The philosophers who have sported on the verge of the tomb, or they who have *affected* to sport in the same situation, both tacitly implied that it was not out of their thoughts—and however dear what we are going to leave may be, all that is not particularly dear must cease to interest us much. If those reflections blend themselves with our gayest thoughts, must not their hue grow more dusty when public misfortunes and disgraces cast a general shade? The age, it is true, soon emerges out of every gloom, and wantons as before.—But does not that levity imprint a still deeper melancholy on those who do think? Have any of our calamities corrected us? Are we not revelling on the brink of the precipice? Does administration grow more sage, or desire that we should grow more sober? Are these themes for letters, my dear lord? Can one repeat common news with indifference, while our shame is writing for future history by the pens of all our numerous enemies? When did England see two whole armies lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners?¹ Can venal addresses efface such stigmas, that will be recorded in every country in Europe? Or will such disgraces have no consequences? Is not America lost to us? Shall we offer up more human victims to the demon of obstinacy—and shall we tax ourselves deeper to furnish out the sacrifice? These are thoughts I cannot stifle at the moment that enforces them; and though I do not doubt but the same spirit of dissipation that has swallowed up all our principles, will reign again in three days with its wonted sovereignty, I had rather be silent than vent my indignation.—Yet I cannot talk, for I cannot think, on any other

¹ The surrender of the ports of York and Gloucester by the British forces in America, under lord Cornwallis, which took place on the 19th October 1781. [Ed.]

subject. It was not six days ago, that in the height of four raging wars I saw in the papers an account of the opera and of the dresses of the company; and thence the town, and thence of course the whole nation, were informed that Mr. F * * * * had very little powder in his hair. Would not one think that our newspapers were penned by boys just come from school for the information of their sisters and cousins? Had we had *Gazettes* and *Morning Posts* in those days, would they have been filled with such tittle-tattle after the battle of Agincourt, or in the more resembling weeks after the battle of Naseby? Did the French trifle equally even during the ridiculous war of the Froude? If they were as impertinent then, at least they had wit in their levity. We are monkeys in conduct, and as clumsy as bears when we try to gambol. Oh! my lord! I have no patience with my country! and shall leave it without regret!—Can we be proud when all Europe scorns us? It was wont to envy us, sometimes to hate us, but never despised us before. James the First was contemptible, but he did not lose an America! His eldest grandson sold us, his younger lost us—but we kept ourselves.—Now we have run to meet the ruin—and it is coming!

I beg your lordship's pardon if I have said too much—but I do not believe I have. You have never sold yourself, and, therefore, have not been accessory to our destruction. You must be happy *now* not to have a son, who would live to grovel in the dregs of England. Your lordship has long been so wise as to secede from the follies of your countrymen. May you and lady Strafford long enjoy the tranquillity that has been your option even in better days!—and may you amuse yourself without giving loose to such reflections as have overflowed in this letter from

Your devoted humble servant.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 30, 1781.

WE are both hearty friends, my dear sir, for I see we have both been reproaching ourselves with silence at the same moment. I am much concerned that you have had cause for

yours. I have had less, though indisposed too in a part material for correspondence, my right hand, which has been in labour of chalk-stones this whole summer, and at times so nervous as to tremble so much, that except when quite necessary, I have avoided a pen. I have been delivered of such a quantity of chalky matter, that I am not only almost free from pain, but hope to avoid a fit this winter. How there can be a doubt what the gout is amazes me ! what is it but a concretion of humours, that either stop up the fine vessels, cause pain and inflammation, and pass away only by perspiration ; or which discharge themselves into chalk stones, which sometimes remain in their beds, sometimes make their passage outwardly. I have experienced all three. It may be objected that the sometimes instantaneous removal of pain from one limb to another, is too rapid for a current of chalk—true, but not for a humour before coagulated. As there is, evidently, too, a degree of wind mixed with the gout, may not that wind be impregnated with the noxious effluvia, especially as the latter are pent up in the body and may be corrupted ?—I hope your present complaint in the foot will clear the rest of your person. Many thanks for your etching of Mr. Browne Willis¹. I shall value it not only as a collector, but because he was your friend. What shall I say about Mr. Gough ? he is not a pleasant man, and I doubt will tease me about many things, some of which I never cared about, and all which I interest myself little about now, when I seek to pass my remnant in most indolent tranquillity. He has not been very civil to me ; he worships the fools I despise, and I conceive has no genuine taste—yet, as to trifling resentments, when the objects have not acted with bad hearts, I can readily lose them. Please Mr. Gough, I certainly shall not ; I cannot be very grave about such idle studies as his and my own, and am apt to be impatient, or laugh when people imagine I am serious about them. But there is a stronger reason why I shall not satisfy Mr. Gough. He is a man to minute down whatever one tells him that he may call information, and whip it into his next publication. However, though I am naturally very frank, I can regulate myself by those I converse with ; and as I shall be on

¹ The rev. Michael Tyson had, at Mr. Cole's particular request, made an etching of Browne Willis, the antiquarian, from an original painting, by Dahl. It is the only portrait of him that has been published. [Ed.]

my guard, I will not decline visiting Mr. Gough, as it would be illiberal or look surly if I refused. You shall have the merit, if you please, of my assent, and shall tell him, I shall be glad to see him any morning at eleven o'clock. This will save you the trouble of sending me his new work, as I conclude he will mention it to me.

I more willingly assure you that I shall like to see Mr. Stevens,² and to show him Strawberry. You never sent me a person you commended, that I did not find deserved it.

You will be surprised when I tell you, that I have only dipped into Mr. Bryant's book,³ and lent the dean's⁴ before I had cut the leaves, though I had peeped into it enough to see that I shall not read it. Both he and Bryant are so diffuse on our ancient literature, that I had rather believe in Rowley than go through their proofs. Mr. Warton and Mr. Tyrwhit have more patience, and intend to answer them—and so the controversy will be two hundred years out of my reach. Mr. Bryant, I did find, begged a vast many questions, which proved to me his own doubts. Dr. Glynn's foolish evidence made me laugh, and so did Mr. Bryant's sensibility *for me*; he says Chatterton treated me very *cruelly* in one of his writings. I am sure I did not feel it so. I suppose Bryant means under the title of Baron of Otranto, which is written with humour. I must have been the sensitive plant, if any thing in that character had hurt me! Mr. Bryant too, and the dean, as I see by extracts in the papers, have decorated Chatterton with sanctimonious honour—think of that young rascal's note, when, summoning up his gains and losses by writing for and against Beckford, he says, “Am glad he is dead by 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*” *There* was a lad of too nice honour to be capable of forgery! and a lad who, they do not deny, forged the poems in the style of Ossian, and fifty other things. In the parts I did read, Mr. Bryant, as I expected, reasons admirably, and staggered me; but when I took up the

² George Stevens, esq., the well-known editor of Shakspeare, whom D'Israeli has so happily christened “Puck the Commentator.” [Ed.]

³ “Observations on the Poems of Thomas Rowley; in which the Authenticity of those Poems is ascertained by Jacob Bryant, esq. London 1781.” 2 vols. 8vo. [Ed.]

⁴ Dean Milles' Commentary, in which the Antiquity of the Rowleian Poems is considered and defended. [Ed.]

poems called Rowley's again, I protest I cannot see the smallest air of antiquity but the old words. The whole texture is conceived on ideas of the present century. The liberal manner of thinking of a monk so long before the Reformation is as stupendous—and where he met with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Eclogues*, and plans of Greek tragedies, when even Caxton, a printer, took Virgil's *Æneid* for so rare a novelty, are not less incomprehensible—though on these things I speak at random, nor have searched for the era when the Greek and Latin classics came again to light—at present I imagine long after our Edward IV.

Another thing struck me in my very cursory perusal of Bryant. He asks where Chatterton could find so much knowledge of English events? I could tell him where he might, by a very natural hypothesis, though merely an hypothesis. It appears by the evidence, that Canninge left six chests of MSS., and that Chatterton got possession of some or several. Now what was therein *so probably* as a diary drawn up by Canninge himself or some churchwarden, or wardens, or by a monk, or monks? Is any thing more natural than for such a person, amidst the events at Bristol, to set down such other public facts as happened in the rest of the kingdom? Was not such almost all the materials of our ancient story? There is actually such an one, with some curious collateral facts, if I am not mistaken, for I write by memory, in the history of Furnese or Fountain's Abbey, I forget which—if Chatterton found such an one, did he want the extensive literature on which so much stress is laid? Hypothesis for hypothesis,—I am sure this is as rational an one, as the supposition, that six chests were filled with poems never else heard of.

These are my indigested thoughts on this matter—not that I ever intend to digest them—for I will not, at sixty-four, sail back into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and be drowned in an ocean of monkish writers of those ages or of this!

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 27, 1782.

FOR these three weeks I have had the gout in my left elbow and hand, and can yet but just bear to lay the latter on the paper while I write with the other. However, this is no complaint, for it is the shortest fit I have had these sixteen years, and with trifling pain; therefore, as the fits decrease, it does ample honour to my bootikins, regimen, and method. Next to my bootikins, I ascribe much credit to a diet drink of dock roots, of which Dr. Turton asked me for the receipt, as the best he had ever seen, and which I will send you if you please. It came from an old physician at Richmond, who did amazing service with it in inveterate scurvies, the parents, or ancestors at least, I believe, of all gout. Your fit I hope is quite gone.

Mr. Gough has been with me—I never saw a more dry, or more cold old gentleman. He told me his new plan is a series of English monuments. I do like the idea, and offered to lend him drawings for it.

I have seen Mr. Stevens too, who is much more flowing. I wish you had told me it was the editor of Shakspeare, for on his mentioning Dr. Farmer, I launched out and said, he was by much the most rational of Shakspeare's commentators, and had given the only sensible account of the authors our great poet had consulted. I really meant those who wrote before Dr. Farmer. Mr. Stevens seemed a little surprised, which made me discover the blunder I had made, for which I was very sorry, though I had meant nothing by it; however, do not mention it. I hope he has too much sense to take it ill, as he must have seen I had no intention of offending him; on the contrary, that my whole behaviour marked a desire of being civil to him as your friend, in which light only you had named him to me. Pray take no notice of it, though I could not help mentioning it, as it lies on my conscience to have been even undesignedly and indirectly unpolite to any body you recommend. I should not, I trust, have been so unintentionally to any body, nor with intention, unless provoked to it by great folly or dirtiness. Adieu!

Yours sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 14, 1782.

I HAVE received such treasures from you, dear sir, through the channel of Mr. Nichols, that I neither know how to thank you, nor to find time to peruse them as fast as I am impatient to do. You must complete your kindness by letting me detain them a few days, till I have gone through them, when I will return them most carefully by the same intervention; and particularly the curious piece of enamel; for though you are, as usual, generous enough to offer it to me, I have plundered you too often already; and indeed I have room left for nothing more, nor have that miserly appetite of continuing to hoard what I cannot enjoy, nor have much time left to possess.

I have already looked into your beautiful illuminated MS. copied from Dr. Stukeley's letter, and with Anecdotes of the Antiquaries of Bene't College; and I have found therein so many charming instances of your candour, humility, and justice, that I grieve to deprive Mr. Gough for a minute even of the possession of so valuable a tract. I will not injure him or it, by begging you to cancel what relates to me, as it would rob you of part of your defence of Mr. Baker. If I wish to have it detained from Mr. Gough till the period affixed in the first leaf, or rather to my death, which will probably precede yours, it is for this reason only: Mr. Gough is apt, as we antiquaries are, to be impatient to tell the world all he knows, which is unluckily much more than the world is at all impatient of knowing. For what you call *your flaming zeal*, I do not in the least object to it. We have agreed to tolerate each other, and certainly are neither of us infallible. I think, on what we differ most, is your calling *my* opinions *fashionable*—they were when we took them up: I doubt it is yours that are most in fashion now, at least in this country. The emperor seems to be of *our* party; but, if I like his notions, I do not admire his judgment, which is too precipitate to *be* judgment.

I smiled at Mr. Gough's idea of my declining his acquaintance as a member of that *obnoxious* society of antiquaries. It is their

folly alone that is obnoxious to me—and can they help that? I shall very cheerfully assist him.

I am glad you are undeceived about the controversial piece in the Gentleman's Magazine, which I should have assured you, as you now know, that it was not mine. I declared, *in my Defence*, that I would publish nothing more about that question. I have not, nor intend it. Neither was it I that wrote the prologue to the Count of Narbonne, but Mr. Jephson himself. On the opposite page I will add the receipt for the diet drink: as to my regimen, I shall not specify it. Not only you would not adopt it, but I should tremble to have you. In fact, I never do prescribe it, as I am persuaded it would kill the strongest man in England, who was not exactly of the same temperament with me, and who had not embraced it early. It consists in temperance to quantity as to eating—I do not mean the quality; but I am persuaded that great abstinence with the gout is dangerous; for, if one does not take nutriment enough, there cannot be strength sufficient to fling out the gout, and then it deviates to palsies. But my great nostrum is the use of cold water, inwardly and outwardly, on all occasions, and total disregard of precaution against catching cold. A hat you know I never wear, my breast I never button, nor wear great coats, &c. I have often had the gout in my face (as last week) and eyes, and instantly dip my head in a pail of cold water, which always cures it, and does not send it any where else. All this I dare do, because I have so for these forty years, weak as I look; but Milo would not have lived a week if he had played such pranks. My diet drink is not all of so Quixote a disposition; any of the faculty will tell you how innocent it is, at least. In a few days, for I am a rapid reader when I like my matter, I will return all your papers and letters; and in the mean time thank you most sincerely for the use of them, and am,

Your ever obliged.

P.S. My old friend, and your acquaintance, Dr. Dodd, died last Saturday—not of cold water. He and I were born on the very same day, but took to different elements. I doubt he had hurt his fortune as well as health.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

February 15, 1782.

I WAS so impatient to peruse all the literary stores you sent me, dear sir, that I stayed at home on purpose to give up a whole evening to them. I have gone through all; your own MS., which I envy Mr. Gough, his specimen, and the four letters to you from the latter and Mr. Stevens. I am glad they were both satisfied with my reception. In truth, you know I am neither formal nor austere, nor have any grave aversion to our antiquaries, though I do now and then divert myself with their solemnity about arrant trifles; yet perhaps we owe much to their thinking those trifles of importance, or the Lord knows how they would have patience to investigate them so indefatigably. Mr. Stevens seemed pleasant, but I doubt I shall never be demure enough to conciliate Mr. Gough. Then I have a wicked quality in an antiquary, nay, one that annihilates the essence: that is, I cannot bring myself to a habit of minute accuracy about very indifferent prints. I do not doubt but there is a swarm of diminutive inaccuracies in my *Anecdotes*—well! if there is, I bequeath free leave of correction to the microscopic intellects of my continuators. I took dates and facts from the sedulous and faithful Vertue,¹ and piqued myself on little but on giving an idea of the spirit of the times with regard to the arts at the different periods.

The specimen you present me of Mr. Gough's detail of our monuments is very differently treated, proves vast industry, and shows most circumstantial fidelity. It extends, too, much farther than I expected, for it seems to embrace the whole mass of our monuments, nay, of some that are vanished. It is not what I thought, an intention of representing our modes of dress, from

¹ George Vertue, the engraver, born at London, in 1684, died 24th July 1756. A short biographical sketch of his active life is inserted in the fifth volume of Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, a work, for the materials of which Walpole was, as he observes, in a great measure indebted to the MS. collections of Vertue, which he bought of his widow. "These collections amounted to near forty volumes, large and small. In one of his pocket-books I found a note of his first intention of compiling such a work: it was in 1713. He continued it assiduously to his death, in 1756."—Walpole's Preface. [Ed.]

figures on monuments, but rather a history of our tombs. It is fortunate, though he may not think so, that so many of the more ancient are destroyed, since for three or four centuries they were clumsy, rude, and ugly. I know I am but a fragment of an antiquary, for I abhor all Saxon doings, and whatever did not exhibit some taste, grace, or elegance, and some ability in the artists. Nay, if I may say so to you, I do not care a straw for arch-bishops, bishops, mitred abbots, and cross-legged knights. When you have one of a sort you have seen all. However, to so superficial a *student in antiquity* as I am, Mr. Gough's work is not unentertaining. It has frequently anecdotes and circumstances of kings, queens, and historic personages, that interest me, though I care not a straw about a series of bishops who had only Christian names, or were removed from one old church to a newer. Still I shall assist Mr. Gough with whatever he wants in my possession. I believe he is a very worthy man, and I should be a churl not to oblige any man who is so innocently employed. I have felt the selfish, the proud avarice of those who hoard literary curiosities for themselves alone, as other misers do money.

I observed in your account of the count, bishop Hervey,² that you call one of his dedicators Martin Sherlock, *Esq.*, p. 53. That Mr. Sherlock is an Irish clergyman;³ I am acquainted with him. He is a very amiable good-natured man, and wants judgment, not parts. He is a little damaged by aiming at Sterne's capricious pertness, which the original wore out, and which, having been admired and cried up to the skies by foreign writers of reviews, was, on the contrary, too severely treated by our own. That injustice shocked Mr. Sherlock, who has a good heart and much simplicity, and sent him in dudgeon last year to Ireland, determined to write no more; yet I am persuaded he will, so strong is his propensity to being an author; and, if he does, correction may make him more attentive to what he says and writes. He has no gall; on the contrary, too much bene-

² Frederick Augustus Hervey, fourth earl of Bristol, and bishop of Derry. [Ed.]

³ In 1786, a volume appeared, which justified Walpole's prediction:—"A Fragment on Shakspeare, extracted from Advice to a Young Poet, by the Rev. Martin Sherlock; and translated from the French." London, 1786. 8vo. [Ed.]

volence in his indiscriminate praise; but he has made many ingenious criticisms. He is a just, a due enthusiast to Shakespeare: but, alas! he scarce likes Richardson less. Pray would it be possible to get a print of Mr. Cowper by Mr. Tyson, mentioned in your MS., p. 45? Beware! do not plunge into your natural generosity, and say, "I have *one* at your service:" you have put me on my guard against your bountiful spirit. I vow solemnly I will not accept *an only one*; nor without that vow would I have named it.

There is another favour I am inclined to ask, but upon condition too that you refuse it if you have the least objection. I have a curiosity to see what the count bishop and Wilkes wrote in an album you mention in p. 52. It is merely a curiosity to *see* them. I give you my honour I will return your transcript without transcribing it; yet, decline my request, if it is not agreeable to you.

The first minute I can spare a servant to send into the city, all your papers written and printed, and the enamel, shall be conveyed to Mr. Nichols: every thing but the two prints of Mr. Br. Willis, for which I thank you. Mr. Nichols has been with me himself—he is a very modest intelligent man.⁴

Now I have done with writing, and am pretty sick of the world and the great world, I have less objection to amusing myself with writers. They divert me when I have nothing to read, especially as I have little else to do. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely.

P.S. Saturday, 16th. The parcel for you will go this evening to Mr. Nichols, so you will inquire for it at the Rose next week.

⁴ John Nichols, the author of the "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," and for many years the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine; in a number of which periodical, for December 1826, may be seen a list of upwards of sixty works, of which this excellent man was either the editor or author. [Ed.]

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

February 22, 1782.

I DOUBT you are again in error, my good sir, about the letter in the Gentleman's Magazine against the Rowleians,¹ unless Mr. Malone sent it to you; for he is the author, and not Mr. Stevens, from whom I imagine you received it. There is a report that some part of Chatterton's forgery is to be produced by an accomplice—but this I do not answer for, nor know the circumstances. I have scarce seen a person who is not persuaded, that the *fashion* of the poems was Chatterton's own, though he might have found some old stuff to work upon, which very likely was the case; but now that the poems have been so much examined, nobody (that has an ear) can get over the modernity of the modulations, and the recent cast of the ideas and phraseology, corroborated by such palpable pillage of Pope and Dryden. Still the boy remains a prodigy by whatever means he procured or produced the edifice erected—and still it will be found inexplicable how he found time or materials for operating such miracles.

You are in another error about sir Harry Englefield, who cannot be going to marry a daughter of lord Cadogan, unless he has a natural one, of whom I never heard. Lord Cadogan has no daughter by his first wife, and his eldest girl by my niece is not five years old. The act of the emperor² to which I

¹ "Cursory Observations on the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, a Priest of the Fifteenth Century; with some Remarks on the Commentaries on those by the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exeter, and Jacob Bryant, esq., and a salutary Proposal addressed to the Friends of those Gentlemen." These observations by Malone, the well-known Shakspearian commentator, were first published in the Gentleman's Magazine, and afterwards printed separately. [Ed.]

² The emperor Joseph, having been restrained during the lifetime of Maria Theresa, by her warm attachment to the Catholic religion, from acting as he wished in ecclesiastical matters, upon her death, which took place in November 1780, issued two ordinances respecting religious orders: by one forbidding them to hold correspondence with their chief in foreign parts; by the other, forbidding any bull or ordinance of the pope from being received in his dominions, until sanctioned by him. In 1782, he directed the suppression of the religious houses, upon which he was visited at Vienna,

alluded, is the general destruction of convents in Flanders, and, I suppose, in his German dominions too. The pope suppressed the carnival, as mourning, and proposes a journey to Vienna to implore mercy. This is a little different from the time when the pontiffs trampled on the necks of emperors, and called it trampling *super Aspidem et Draconem*. I hope you have received your cargo back undamaged. I was much obliged to you, and am,

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.

March 8, 1782.

It is very pleasing to receive congratulations from a friend on a friend's success—that success, however, is not so agreeable as the universal esteem allowed to Mr. Conway's character, which not only accompanies his triumph,¹ but I believe contributed to it. To-day, I suppose, all but his character will be reversed; for there must have been a miraculous change if the Philistines do not bear as ample a testimony to their Dagon's honour, as conviction does to that of a virtuous man. In truth, I am far from desiring that the opposition should prevail yet: the nation is not sufficiently changed, nor awakened enough, and it is sure of having its feelings repeatedly attacked by more woes; the blow will have more effect a little time hence: the clamour must be loud enough to drown the huzzas of five hoarse

in the month of March, by the Pope, who was received with the greatest respect, but was unable to procure any intermission in the emperor's ecclesiastical reforms. [Ed.]

¹ He had, on the 27th February 1782, particularly distinguished himself in the House of Commons by his motion, "That the farther prosecution of an offensive war on the continent of America, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies to obedience by force, will be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies; that it greatly tends to increase the mutual enmity so fatal to the interests both of Great Britain and of America, and by preventing a happy reconciliation with that country, to frustrate the earnest desire graciously expressed by his majesty, to restore the blessings of public tranquillity." This motion, after a short debate, was carried; upon which General Conway moved, "that an humble address be presented to his majesty thereupon." This was carried without a division, and the address presented accordingly. [Ed.]

bodies, the Scotch, Tories, Clergy, Law, and Army, who would soon croak if new ministers cannot do what the old have made impossible; and therefore, till general distress involves all in complaint, and lays the cause undeniably at the right doors, victory will be but momentary, and the conquerors would soon be rendered more unpopular than the vanquished; for, depend upon it, the present ministers would not be as decent and as harmless an opposition as the present. Their criminality must be legally proved and stigmatized, or the pageant itself would soon be restored to essence. Base money will pass till cried down. I wish you may keep your promise of calling upon me better than you have done. Remember, that though *you* have time enough before you, I have not; and, consequently, must be much more impatient for our meeting than you are, as I am, dear sir,

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, March 9, 1782.

THOUGH I have scarce time, I must write a line to thank you for the print of Mr. Cowper, and to tell you how ashamed I am that you should have so much attention to me, on the slightest wish I express, when I fear my gratitude is not half so active, though it ought to exceed obligations.

Dr. Farmer has been with me, and though it was but a short visit, he pleased me so much by his easy simplicity and good sense, that I wish for more acquaintance with him.

I do not know whether the emperor will atone to you for demolishing the cross, by attacking the crescent. The papers say he has declared war with the Turks. He seems to me to be a mountebank who professes curing all diseases. As power is his only panacea, the remedy methinks is worse than the disease. Whether Christianity will be laid aside I cannot say. As nothing of the spirit is left, the forms, I think, signify very little. * Surely it is not an age of morality and principle; does it import whether profligacy is baptized or not? I look to motives, not to professions. I do not approve of convents:

but, if Cæsar wants to make soldiers of monks, I detest his reformation, and think that men had better not procreate than commit murder ; nay, I believe that monks get more children than soldiers do, but what avail abstracted speculations ? Human passions wear the dresses of the times, and carry on the same views, though in different habits. Ambition and interest set up religions or pull them down, as fashion presents a handle ; and the conscientious must be content, when the mode favours their wishes, or sigh when it does not.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

April 13, 1782.

YOUR partiality to me, my good sir, is much overseen, if you think me fit to correct your Latin. Alas ! I have not skimmed ten pages of Latin these dozen years. I have dealt in nothing but English, French, and a little Italian, and do not think, if my life depended on it, I could write four lines of pure Latin. I have had occasion once or twice to speak that language, and soon found that all my verbs were Italian with Roman terminations. I would not on any account draw you into a scrape, by depending on my skill in what I have half forgotten. But you are in the metropolis of Latium. If you distrust your own knowledge, which I do not, especially from the specimen you have sent me, surely you must have good critics at your elbow to consult.

In truth, I do not love Roman inscriptions in lieu of our own language, though, if any where, proper in an university—neither can I approve writing what the Romans themselves would not understand. What does it avail to give a Latin tail to a Guildhall ? Though the word used by moderns, would *major* convey to Cicero the idea of a *mayor* ? *Architectus*, I believe, is the right word ; but I doubt whether *veteris-jam per antiquæ* is classic for a dilapidated building—but do not depend on me ; consult some better judges.

Though I am glad of the late *revolution*, a word for which I have great reverence, I shall certainly not dispute with you

thereon. I abhor exultation. If the change produces peace, I shall make a bonfire in my heart. Personal interest I have none; you and I shall certainly never profit by the politics to which we are attached. The Archæologic epistle¹ I admire exceedingly, though I am sorry it attacks Mr. Bryant, whom I love and respect. The dean is so absurd an oaf, that he deserves to be ridiculed. Is any thing more hyperbolic than his preferences of Rowley to Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton. Whether Rowley or Chatterton was the author, are the poems in any degree comparable to those authors? is not a ridiculous author an object of ridicule? I do not even guess at your meaning in your conclusive paragraph on that subject: Dictionary-writer I suppose alludes to Johnson: but surely you do not equal the compiler of a dictionary to a genuine poet? Is a brickmaker on a level with Mr. Essex? Nor can I hold that exquisite wit and satire are Billingsgate; if they were, Milles and Johnson would be able to write an answer to the epistle. I do as little guess whom you mean that got a pension by Toryism—if Johnson too; he got a pension for having abused pensioners, and yet took one himself, which was contemptible enough. Still less know I who preferred opposition to principles, which is not a very common case; whoever it was, as Pope says,

The way he took was strangely round about.

With Mr. Chamberlayne I was very little acquainted, nor ever saw him six times in my life. It was with lord Walpole's branch he was intimate, and to whose eldest son Mr. Chamberlayne had been tutor. This poor gentleman had a most excellent character universally, and has been more feelingly regretted than almost any man I ever knew. This is all I am able to tell you. I forgot to say, I am also in the dark as to the person you guess for the author of the epistle. It cannot be the same person to whom it is generally attributed, who certainly neither has a pension nor has deserted his principles, nor has reason to be jealous of those he laughed at; for their abilities are far below

¹ An Archæological Epistle to Jeremiah Milles, D.D., Dean of Exeter, &c.: to which is added, a Glossary, extracted from that of the learned dean. London, 1782. 4to.

This poem has been by some attributed to Mason; by others, to John Baynes, of Lincoln's-inn. [Ed.]

his. I do not mean that it is his, but is attributed to him. It was sent to me, nor did I ever see a line of it till I read it in print. In one respect it is most credible to be his, for there are not two such inimitable poets in England. I smiled on reading it, and said to myself, "Dr. Glynn is well off to have escaped!" His language indeed about me has been Billingsgate; but peace be to his and the manes of Rowley, if they have ghosts who never existed. The epistle has not put an end to that controversy, which was grown so tiresome. I rejoice at having kept my resolution of not writing a word more on that subject: the dean had swollen it to an enormous bladder; the archæologic poet pricked it with a pin; a sharp one indeed, and it burst. Pray send me a better account of yourself if you can.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.

Berkeley-square, April 18, 1782.

I HAVE great pleasure, dear sir, in your preferment, and sincerely wish you joy. I have no doubt but your abilities will continue my satisfaction as long as I can be witness to their success. I did not expect to live to see the door opened to constitutional principles. That they have recovered their energy, is a proof of their excellence; and I hope that, as they have surmounted their enemies, they will not be ever betrayed by their friends.

Yours heartily.

TO MR. NICHOLS.

April 1782.

As it is said to be so much desired, the author consents to let the whole of the Letter on Chatterton be printed in the Gentleman's Magazine; but not in a separate pamphlet.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 14, 1782.

I AM very sorry for the shock you have had, in the loss of your niece, dear sir ; and so I am for my old friend Dr. Apthorpe. I would say more, but as I am confined with an uncommon complaint for me, a violent cold, cough, and tightness on my breast, for which I have been blooded two days together, with all possible success ; yet as my arm is bound up, it is rather awkward to write—however, I could not help telling you, I partake of whatever affects you, nor defer complying with your request. I prefer sending a card, lest Margaret, who is no scholar but by rote, should make any mistake in giving her verbal or written orders—to which she is less accustomed than to cards.

I hope you will soon recover your indisposition and flurry ;
and am
Ever yours.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, May 24, 1782.

You are always kind to me, dear sir, in all respects, I have been forced to recur to a rougher prescription than ass's milk. The pain and oppression on my breast obliged me to be blooded two days together, which removed my cold and fever ; but, as I foresaw, left me the gout in their room. I have had it in my left foot and hand for a week, but it is going. This cold is very epidemic. I have at least half a dozen nieces and great nieces confined with it, but it is not dangerous or lasting. I shall send you, within this day or two, the new edition of my *Anecdotes of Painting* ; you will find very little new ; it is a cheap edition for the use of artists, and that at least they who really want the book, and not the curiosity, may have it, without being forced to give the outrageous price at which the Strawberry edition sells, merely because it is rare.

I could assure Mr. Gough that the letter on Chatterton cost me very small pains. I had nothing to do but recollect and relate the truth. There has been published another piece on it, which I cannot tell whether meant to praise or blame me; so wretchedly is it written; and I have received another anonymous one, dated Oxford, (which may be to disguise Cambridge) and which professes to treat me very severely, though stuffed with fulsome compliments. It abuses me for speaking modestly of myself—a fault I hope I shall never mend; avows agreeing with me on the supposition of the poems, which may be a lie, for it is not uncharitable to conclude that an anonymous writer is a liar; acquits me of being at all accessory to the poor lad's catastrophe; and then, with most sensitive nerves, is shocked to death, and finds me guilty of it, for having, after it happened, dropped, that had he lived he might have fallen into more serious forgeries, though I declare that I never heard that he did. To be sure, no Irishman ever blundered more, than to accuse one of an *ex post facto* murder! If this Hibernian casuist is smitten enough with his own miscarriage to preserve it in a magazine phial, I shall certainly not answer it, not even by this couplet which is suggested:

So fulsome, yet so captious too, to tell you much it grieves me,
That though your flattery makes me sick, your peevishness relieves me.

Adieu, my good sir—pray inquire for your books, if you do not receive them. They go by the Cambridge Fly.

Yours ever.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, June 1, 1782.

I THANK you much, dear sir, for your kind intention about Elizabeth of York; but it would be gluttony and rapacity to accept her; I have her already in the picture of her marriage,¹ which was lady Pomfret's; besides Vertue's print of her with her husband, son, and daughter-in-law. In truth I have not room

¹ This picture of the Marriage of Elizabeth of York with Henry VII. was painted by Mabuse, and is described in the first volume of Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting*. [Ed.]

for any more pictures any where ; yet, without plundering you, or without impoverishing myself, I have supernumerary pictures with which I can furnish your vacancies ; but I must get well first to look them out : as yet I cannot walk alone ; and my posture, as you see, makes me write ill. It is impossible to recover in such weather—never was such a sickly time.

I have not yet seen bishop Newton's *Life*.² I will not give three guineas for what I would not give three-pence, his *Works* : his *Life*, I conclude, will be borrowed by all the magazines, and there I shall see it.

I know nothing of *Acciliator*—I have forgotten some of my good Latin, and luckily never knew any bad ; having always detested monkish barbarism. I have just finished Mr. Pennant's new volume ; parts of which amused me, though I knew every syllable that was worth knowing before, for there is not a word of novelty ; and it is tiresome his giving such long extracts out of Dugdale and other common books, and telling one long stories about all the most celebrated characters in the English history, besides panegyrics on all who showed him their houses : but the prints are charming—though I cannot conceive why he gave one of the countess of Cumberland, who never did any thing worth memory, but recording the very night on which she conceived.

The *Fair Circassian* was written by a Mr. Pratt,¹ who has published several works under the name of Courtney Melmoth. The play might have been written by Cumberland—it is bad enough. I did read the latter's coxcombical anecdotes, but saw nothing on myself, except mention of my Painters. Pray what is the passage you mean on me or Vertue ? Do not write on purpose to answer this—it is not worth while.

I have just bought a most curious old picture, a portrait of one of whom I never saw a head—it is Robert Vere, duke of

² "The Works of Thomas (Newton), Lord Bishop of Bristol, with some Account of his Life, and Anecdotes of several of his Friends. London, 1782." 3 vols. quarto.

This distinguished prelate was the editor of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ; but is chiefly known by his very valuable and learned "Dissertations on the Prophecies." [Ed.]

³ Thomas Jackson Pratt, the author of "Gleanings in England," "Gleanings through Wales, Holland, and Westphalia," and many other works, which were exceedingly popular in their day. [Ed.]

Ireland, the great favourite of Richard II. It is evidently very ancient, being only part of a larger piece on board. Behind the head is this remnant of an inscription, which being defective, and thence unintelligible, shows it is not an imposition—I mean not a modern cheat ; though, perhaps, not a genuine portrait ; here is what remains—

Robert	The syllables under which	Robertus Verus
Dux	I have drawn a line are	Dux Hibernia
Dublin	evidently more recent, not	Dubliniæ Marchio
Oxon.	on the same piece of	Oxoniae Comes
Baron	board. I imagine the	Baro ———
Rari	part wanting might be, as	
Bula	I have supplied it, on	
Nebo	the right hand,	
Ob. 1393.		

but I can make nothing of the three last pieces of words, which might be parts of Irish baronies. Will you be so good as to look into Collin's house of Vere, or Dugdale, &c. for I have no book in town. Let this too be at your leisure ; for I am in no hurry, except to hear that you are better. Adieu !

TO MR. NICHOLS.

Berkeley-square, June 19, 1782.

SIR,

Just this moment, on opening your fifth volume of Miscellaneous Poems, I find the translation of Cato's Speech into Latin, attributed (by common fame) to bishop Atterbury. I can most positively assure you, that that Translation was the work of Dr. Henry Bland, afterwards head-master of Eton school, provost of the college there, and dean of Durham. I have more than once heard my father, sir Robert Walpole, say that it was he himself who gave that Translation to Mr. Addison, who was extremely surprised at the fidelity and beauty of it. It may be worth while, sir, on some future occasion, to mention this fact in some one of your valuable and curious publications.

I am sir, with great regard.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Berkeley-square, June 21, 1782.

IT is no trouble, my good sir, to write to you, for I am as well recovered as I generally do. I am very sorry you do not, and especially in your hands, as your pleasure and comforts so much depend on them. Age is by no means a burden while it does not subject one to depend on others; when it does, it reconciles one to quitting every thing—at least I believe you and I think so, who do not look on solitude as a calamity. I shall go to Strawberry to-morrow, and will, as I might have thought of doing, consult Dugdale and Collins for the duke of Ireland's inferior titles. Mr. Gough I shall be glad of seeing, when I am settled there, which will not be this fortnight.

I think there are but eleven parts of Marianne, and that it breaks off in the nun's story, which promised to be very interesting. Marivaux¹ never finished Marianne, nor the Paysan Parvenu (which was the case too with the younger Crebillon with Les Egaremens). I have seen too bad conclusions of Marianne by other hands.

Elizabeth of York I beg you will keep—I really have not a place for it; but I shall send you by Monday's Fly, four very indifferent pictures, which will not deserve the smallest thanks: I shall be content if one of them will serve to fill your vacancy, and if the others will be of any use to you. If they are not, I assure you they are not worth returning, though I bought them all at Mr. Sheldon's in lots with other articles: one is a portrait of Selden; the three others are an altar-piece with doors and arms, which, by the flourishing sort of mantle round, seem to be Flemish or Dutch. Mr. Cumberland's *brusquerie* is not worth notice, nor did I remember it. Mr. Pennant's impetuosity you must overlook too, though I love your delicacy about your friend's memory. Nobody that knows you will suspect you of wanting it; but, in the ocean of books that overflows every day, who will recollect a thousandth part of what is in most of them? By the number of writers one should naturally

¹ Pierre Carlet de Marivaux, author of many popular romances and dramas, was born at Paris in 1688, and died in 1763. [Ed.]

suppose there were multitudes of readers ; but if there are, which I doubt, the latter only read the productions of the day. Indeed, if they did read former publications, they would have no occasion to read the modern, which like Mr. Pennant's are borrowed wholesale from the more ancient : it is sad to say, that the borrowers add little new but mistakes. I have just been turning over Mr. Nichols's eight volumes of *Select Poems*, which he has swelled unreasonably with large collops of old authors, most of whom little deserved revivifying. I bought them for the biographical notes, in which I have found both inaccuracies and blunders. For instance, one that made me laugh. In lord Lansdown's *Beauties* he celebrates a lady, or Mrs. Vaughan. Mr. Nichols turns to the peerage of that time, and finds a duke of Bolton married a lady Ann Vaughan ; he instantly sets her down for the lady in question, and introduces her to posterity as a beauty. Unluckily she was a monster—so ugly, that the duke, then marquis of Winchester, being forced by his father to marry her for her great fortune, was believed never to have consummated, and parted from her as soon as his father died ; but, if our predecessors are exposed to these misrepresentations, what shall we be, when not only all private history is detailed in the newspapers, but scarce ever with tolerable fidelity ! I have long said, that if a paragraph in a newspaper contains a word of truth, it is sure to be accompanied with two or three blunders—yet who will believe that papers published in the face of the whole town, should be nothing but magazines of lies, every one of which fifty persons could contradict and disprove ? Yet so it certainly is, and future history will probably be ten times falser than all preceding. Adieu !

Yours most sincerely.

TO MR. NICHOLS.

June 30.

MR. Walpole is much obliged to Mr. Nichols for the prints, and will beg another of Mr. Bowyer for his *Collection of Heads*, as he shall put the one he has received to Mr. Bowyer's *Life*.¹

¹ “Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of William Bowyer, Printer, F.S.A., and of many of his learned Friends : containing an incidental View

Mr. Walpole has no objection to being named for the anecdote of Dr. Bland's Translation, as it is right to authenticate it.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.

Strawberry-hill, July 23, 1782.

I HAVE been more dilatory than usual, dear sir, in replying to your last; but it called for no particular answer, nor have I now any thing worth telling you. Mr. Gough and Mr. Nichols dined with me on Saturday last. I lent the former three-and-twenty drawings of monuments out of Mr. Lethuillier's books, for his large work, which will be a magnificent one. Mr. Nichols is, as you say, a very rapid editor, and I must commend him for being a very accurate one. I scarce ever saw a book so correct as his *Life of Mr. Bowyer*. I wish it deserved the pains he has bestowed on it every way, and that he would not dub so many men *great*. I have known several of his *heroes*, who were very *little* men. Dr. Meade¹ had nothing but pretensions, and Philip Carteret Webbe² was a sorry knave, with still less foundation. To what a slender total do those shrink who are the idols of their own age! How very few are known at all at the end of the next century! But there is a chapter in Voltaire that would cure anybody of being a great man even in his own eyes. It is a chapter in which a Chinese goes into a bookseller's shop, and marvels at not finding any of his own country's classics. It is a chapter that ought never to be out of the sight of any vain author. I have just got the catalogue of the MSS. in the Museum. It is every way piteously dear—the method is ex-

of the Progress and Advancement of Literature in this Kingdom, from the beginning of the present Century to the end of the Year 1777. London, 1782." 4to. This edition of Nichol's *Life of Bowyer* had a portrait of him, engraved by Basire. [Ed.]

¹ Dr. Richard Meade, the physician, born at Stepney 1673; died 1754. [Ed.]

² Philip Carteret Webbe, the antiquary, author of "*A Short Account of Dane Geld: with some further Particulars relating to William the Conqueror's Survey, London, 1756,*" which was published by the Society of Antiquaries. [Ed.]

tremely puzzling, and the contents chiefly rubbish: who would give a rush for Dr. Birch's correspondence? many of the pieces are in print. In truth, I set little store by a collection of MSS. A work must be of little value that never could get into print; I mean, if it has existed half a century. The articles that diverted me most were an absolute novelty; I knew Henry VIII. was a royal author, but not a royal quack. There are several receipts of his own, and this delectable one amongst others. "The king's grace's oyntement made at St. James's, to coole, and dry, and comfort the ——." Another, to the same purpose, was devised at *Cawoode*—was not that an episcopal palace? how devoutly was the head of the church employed! I hope that you have recovered your spirits, and that summer, which is arrived at last, will make a great amendment in you.

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, August 16, 1782.

IF this letter reaches your lordship, I believe it must be conveyed by a dove; for we are all under water, and a postman has not where to set the sole of his foot. They tell me, that in the north, you have not been so drowned, which will be very fortunate; for in these parts every thing is to be apprehended for the corn, the sheep, and the camps—but, in truth, all kinds of prospects are most gloomy, and even in lesser lights uncomfortable. Here we cannot stir, but armed for battle. Mr. Potts, who lives at Mr. Hindley's, was attacked and robbed last week at the end of Gunnersbury-lane, by five footpads who had two blunderbusses. Lady Browne and I do continue going to Twickenham-park; but I don't know how long it will be prudent, nor whether it is so now.

I have not been at Park-place, for Mr. Conway is never there, at least only for a night or two. His regiment was reviewed yesterday at Ashford-common, but I did not go to see it.—In truth, I have so little taste for common sights, that I never did see a review in my life. I was in town last week, yet

saw not monsieur de Grasse;¹ nor have seen the giant or the dwarf.

Poor Mrs. Clive is certainly very declining, but has been better of late, and which I am glad of, thinks herself better. All visions that comfort one are desirable—the conditions of mortality do not bear being pryed into; nor am I an admirer of that philosophy that scrutinizes into them: the philosophy of deceiving one's self is vastly preferable. What signifies anticipating what we cannot prevent?

I do not pretend to send your lordship any news, for I do not know a tittle, nor inquire. Peace is the sole event of which I wish to hear. For private news, I have outlived almost all the world with which I was acquainted, and have no curiosity about the next generation, scarce more than about the 20th century. I wish I was less indifferent, for the sake of the few with whom I correspond, your lordship in particular, who are always so good and partial to me, and on whom I should indubitably wait, were I fit to take a long journey; but as I walk no better than a tortoise, I make a conscience of not incommodating my friends, whom I should only confine at home. Indeed both my feet and hands are so lame, that I now scarce ever dine abroad. Being so antiquated and insipid, I will release your lordship, and am, with my unalterable respects to lady Strafford,

Your lordship's most devoted humble servant.

TO MR. NICHOLS.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 18, 1782.

MR. Walpole is extremely obliged to Mr. Nichols for the books and prints; and begs, when he sees Mr. Gough, to thank him for his obliging present of Mr. Brown's tract.

¹ The comte de Grasse, the admiral of the French fleet, which Rodney defeated on the 12th April 1782, and who had struck his flag in that engagement to the *Barfleur*, and surrendered himself to sir Samuel Hood, landed at Portsmouth, as a prisoner of war, on the 5th August. [Ed.]

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 17, 1782.

I HAD not time yesterday to say what I had to say about your coming hither. I should certainly be happy to see you and lady Ailesbury at any time ; but it would be unconscionable to expect it when you have scarce a whole day in a month to pass at your own house, and to look after your own works. Friends, I know, lay as great stress upon trifles as upon serious points ; but as there never was a more sincere attachment than mine, so it is the most reasonable one, too, for I always think for you more than myself. Do whatever you have to do, and be assured, that is what I like best that you should do. The present hurry cannot last always. Your present object is to show how much more fit you are for your post¹ than any other man ; by which you will do infinite service too, and will throw a great many private acts of good-nature and justice into the account. Do you think I would stand in the way of any of these things ? and that I am not aware of them ? Do you think about me ? If it suits you at any moment, come. Except Sunday next, when I am engaged to dine abroad, I have nothing to do till the middle of October, when I shall go to Nuneham ; and, going or coming, may possibly catch you at Park-place.

I am not quite credulous about your turning smoke into gold :² it is perhaps because I am ignorant. I like Mr. M * * * extremely ; and though I have lived so long that I have little confidence, I think you could not have chosen one more likely to be faithful. I am sensible that my kind of distrust would prevent all great enterprises—and yet I cannot but fear, that unless one gives one's self up entirely to the pursuit of a new object, this risk must be doubled. But I will say no more ; for I do not even wish to dissuade you, as I am sure I understand nothing of the matter, and therefore mean no more than to keep your discretion awake.

The tempest of Monday night alarmed me, too, for the fleet : and as I have nothing to do but to care, I feel for individuals as

¹ Mr. Conway was now commander-in-chief. [Or.]

² Alluding to the coke-ovens, for which Mr. Conway afterwards obtained a patent. [Or.]

well as for the public, and think of all those who may be lost, and of all those who may be made miserable by such loss. Indeed, I care most for individuals—for as to the public, it seems to be totally insensible to every thing!

I know nothing worth repeating : and having now answered all your letter, shall bid you good night.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, October 3, 1782.

I DID think it long since I had the honour of hearing from your lordship ; but conscious how little I could repay you with any entertainment, I waited with patience. In fact, I believe summer-correspondences often turn on complaints of want of news. It is unlucky that that is generally the season of correspondence as it is of separation. People assembled in a capital contrive to furnish matter, but then they have not occasion to write it. Summer being the season of campaigns ought to be more fertile—I am glad when that is not the case, for what is an account of a battle but a list of burials? Vultures and birds of prey might write with pleasure to their correspondents in the Alps of such events—but they ought to be melancholy topics to those who have no beaks or talons. At this moment, if I was an epicure among the sharks, I should rejoice that general Elliot has just sent the carcasses of 1,500 Spaniards down to market under Gibraltar¹—but I am more pleased that he dispatched boats and saved some of those whom he had overset. What must a man of so much feeling have suffered at being forced to do his duty so well as he has done ! I remember hearing such another humane being, that brave old admiral sir Charles Wager, say, that in his life he had never killed a fly.

This demolition of the Spanish armada is a great event—a very good one if it prevents a battle between lord Howe and the combined fleets, as I should hope ; and yet better if it

¹ On the 13th September 1782, when Elliot repulsed the grand attack made on Gibraltar, and Captain Curtis, of the *Brilliant*, who commanded the marine brigade upon the occasion, and his men, saved numbers of the Spaniards, at the hazard of their own lives. [Ed.]

produces peace ; the only political crisis to which I look with eagerness. Were that happy moment arrived, there is ample matter to employ our great men, if we have any, in retrieving the affairs of this country, if they are to be retrieved.—But though our sedentary politicians write abundance of letters in the newspapers, full of plans of public spirit, I doubt the nation is not sober enough to set about its own work in earnest. When none reform themselves, little good is to be expected. We see by the excess of highwaymen how far evils will go before any attempt is made to cure them. I am sure, from the magnitude of this inconvenience, that I am not talking merely like an old man. I have lived here above thirty years, and used to go every where round at all hours of the night without any precaution. I cannot now stir a mile from my own house after sun-set without one or two servants with blunderbusses. I am not surprised your lordship's pheasants were stolen: a woman was taken last Saturday night loaded with nine geese, and they say has impeached a gang of fourteen housebreakers—but these are under-graduates—when they should have taken their doctor's degrees, they would not have peddled in such little game. Those regius-professors, the nabobs, have taught men not to plunder for farthings.

I am very sensible of your lordship's kindness to my nephew Mr. C * * *. He is a sensible, well-behaved young man, and, I trust, would not have abused your goodness.

Mr. Mason writes to me, that he shall be at York at the end of this month. I was to have gone to Nuneham ; but the house is so little advanced, that it is a question whether they can receive me. Mason, I doubt, has been idle there. I am sure, if he found no muses there, he could pick up none at Oxford, where there is not so much as a bed-maker that ever lived in a muse's family.

Tonton begs his duty to all the lambs, and trusts that lady Strafford will not reject his homage.

I am, yours, &c.

TO THE REV. MR. COLE.¹

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 5, 1782.

I HAD begun a letter in answer to another person, which I have broken off on receiving yours, dear sir. I am exceedingly concerned at the bad account you give of yourself; and yet, on weighing it, I flatter myself that you are not only out of all danger, but have had a fortunate crisis, which I hope will prolong your life. A bile surmounted is a present from nature to us, who are not boys: and though you speak as weary of life from sufferings, and yet with proper resignation and philosophy, it does not frighten me, as I know that any humour and gathering, even in the gum, is strangely dispiriting.

I do not write merely from sympathising friendship, but to beg that if your bile is not closed or healing, you will let me know, for the bark is essential, yet very difficult to have genuine. My apothecary here, I believe, has some very good, and I will send you some directly.

I will thank you, but not trouble you with an account of myself. I had no fit of the gout, nor any new complaint; but it is with the utmost difficulty I keep the humour from laming me entirely, especially in my hands, which are a mine of chalk stones; but, as they discharge themselves, I flatter myself they prevent heavier attacks.

I do take in the *European Magazine*, and think it in general one of the best. I forgot what was said of me—sometimes I am corrected, sometimes flattered, and care for neither. I have not seen the answer to Mr. Warton, but will send for it.

I shall not be sorry on my own account if Dr. Lort quits Lambeth, and comes to Saville-row, which is in my neighbourhood—but I did not think a wife was the stall where he would set up his staff.

You have given me the only reason why I cannot be quite sorry that you do not print what you had prepared for the press. No kind intencion towards me from you surprises me—but then I want no new proofs. My wish, for whatever shall be the

¹ Mr. Cole died within six weeks of the date of this letter, on the 16th of December 1782. [Or.]

remainder of my life, is to be quiet and forgotten. Were my course to recommence, and could think in youth as one does at sixty-five, I have no notion I should have courage to appear as an author. Do you know, too, that I look on fame now as the idlest of all visions? but this theme would lead me too far.

I collect a new comfort from your letter. The *writing* is much better than in most of your latest letters. If your pain were not ceased, you could not have formed your letters so firmly and distinctly. I will not say more, lest I should draw you into greater fatigue; let me have but a single line in answer.

Yours most cordially.

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.

Berkeley-square, May 17, 1783.

THOUGH I shall not be fixed at Strawberry, on this day fortnight, I will accept your offer, dear sir, because my time is more at my disposal than yours, and you may not have any other day to bestow upon me later. I thank you for your second, which I shall read as carefully as I did the former. It is not your fault if you have not yet made sir * * * white as driven snow to me. Nature has providentially given us a powerful antidote to eloquence, or the criminal that has the best advocate would escape. But, when rhetoric and logic stagger my lords the judges, in steps prejudice, and, without one argument that will make a syllogism, confutes Messrs. Demosthenes, Tully, and Hardinge, and makes their lordships see as clearly as any old woman in England, that *belief* is a much better rule of *faith* than *demonstration*. This is just my case: I do believe, nay, and I will believe, that no man ever went to India with honest intentions. If he returns with 100,000*l.* it is plain that I was in the right. But I have still a stronger proof—my lord Coke says, “Set a thief to catch a thief:” my lord A * * * says, “Sir * * * is a rogue:” *ergo*—I cannot give so complete an answer to the rest of your note, as I trust I have done to your pleadings, because the latter is in print, and your note is MS. Now unfortunately, I cannot read half of it; for, give me leave to say, that either your hand or my spectacles are so bad, that I generally

guess at your meaning rather than decipher it, and this time the context has not served me well. You shall comment on it when I see you ; till when, I am, as usually,

Much yours.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 24, 1783.

THOUGH your lordship's partiality extends even to my letters, you must perceive that they grow as antiquated as the writer. News are the soul of letters : when we give them a body of our own invention, it is as unlike to life as a statue. I have withdrawn so much from the world, that the newspapers know every thing before me, especially since they have usurped the province of telling every thing, private as well as public ; and consequently a great deal more than I should wish to know, or like to report. When I do hear the transactions of much younger people, they do not pass from my ears into my memory ; nor does your lordship interest yourself more about them than I do. Yet still, when one reduces one's department to such narrow limits, one's correspondence suffers by it. However, as I desire to show only my gratitude and attachment, not my wit, I shall certainly obey your lordship as long as you are content to read my letters, after I have told you how little they can entertain you.

For imports of French, I believe we shall have few more. They have not ruined us so totally by the war, much less enriched themselves so much by it, but that they who have been here, complained so piteously of the expensiveness of England, that probably they will deter others from a similar jaunt—nor, such is their fickleness, are the French constant to any thing but admiration of themselves. Their Anglomanie I hear has mounted—or descended—from our customs to our persons. English people are in fashion at Versailles. A Mr. * * * *, who wrote some pretty verses at Bath two or three years ago, is a favourite there. One who was so, or may be still, the *beau Dillon*, came upon a very different errand—in short, to purchase at any price a book written by Linguet, which was just coming out, called *Antoinette*. That will tell your lordship why the *beau Dillon* was the messenger.

Monsieur de Guignes¹ and his daughters came hither—but it was at eight o'clock at night in the height of the deluge. You may be sure I was much flattered by such a visit! I was forced to light candles to show them any thing; and must have lighted the moon to show them the views. If this is their way of seeing England, they might as well look at it with an opera-glass from the shore of Calais.

Mr. Mason is to come to me on Sunday, and will find me mighty busy in making my lock of hay, which is not yet cut. I don't know why, but people are always more anxious about their hay than their corn, or twenty other things that cost them more. I suppose my lord Chesterfield, or some such dictator, made it fashionable to care about one's hay.—Nobody betrays solicitude about getting in his rents.

We have exchanged spring and summer for autumn and winter, as well as day for night. If religion or law enjoined people to love light, and prospects, and verdure, I should not wonder if perverseness made us hate them—no, nor if society made us prefer living always in town to solitude and beauty. But that is not the case. The most fashionable hurry into the country at Christmas and Easter, let the weather be ever so bad—and the finest ladies, who will go no whither till eleven at night, certainly pass more tiresome hours in London alone, than they would in the country. But all this is no business of mine: they do what they like, and so do I: and I am exceedingly tolerant about people who are perfectly indifferent to me. The sun and the seasons were not gone out of fashion when I was young—and I may do what I will with them now I am old; for fashion is fortunately no law but to its devotees. Were I five-and-twenty, I dare to say I should think every whim of my cotemporaries very wise, as I did then. In one light I am always on the side of the young; for they only silently despise those who do not conform to their ordinances; but age is very apt to be angry at the change of customs, and partial to others no better founded. It is happy when we are occupied by nothing more serious. It is happy for a nation when mere fashions are a topic that can employ its attention; for though dissipation may lead to graver moments, it commences with ease and tranquillity; and they at least who live before the scene shifts

¹ Le comte de Guignes, who succeeded the marquis de Châtelet as ambassador from France to England. [Ed.]

are fortunate, considering and comparing themselves with the various regions who enjoy no parallel felicity. I confess my reflections are *couleur de rose* at present. I did not much expect to live to see peace, without far more extensive ruin than has fallen on us. I will not probe futurity in search of less agreeable conjectures. Prognosticators may see many seeds of dusky hue—but I am too old to look forwards. Without any omens, common sense tells one, that in the revolution of ages nations must have unprosperous periods. But why should I torment myself for what may happen in twenty years after my death, more than for what may happen in two hundred? Nor shall I be more interested in the one than in the other. This is no indifference for my country; I wish it could always be happy—but so I do to all other countries. Yet who could ever pass a tranquil moment, if such future speculations vexed him?

Adieu, my good lord!—I doubt this letter has more marks of senility than the one I announce at the beginning. When I had no news to send you, it was no reason for tiring you with commonplaces. But your lordship's indulgence spoils me. Does not it look as if I thought, that, because you commend my letters, you would like whatever I say? Will not lady Strafford think that I abuse your patience?—I ask both your pardons—and am to both

A most devoted humble servant.

TO MR. GOUGH.

Strawberry-hill, July 5, 1783.

MR. WALPOLE is extremely obliged to Mr. Gough for his magnificent present, and very glad to have had an opportunity of contributing to so beautiful and valuable a work. Mr. Walpole should have thanked Mr. Gough sooner, but he did not know how to direct, till he had sent to Mr. Nichols.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 1, 1783.

IT would be great happiness indeed to me, my dear lord, if such nothings as my letters could contribute to any part of your lordship's; but as your own partiality bestows their chief merit on them, you see they owe more to your friendship than to the writer. It is not my interest to depreciate them; much less to undermine the foundation of their sole worth. Yet it would be dishonest not to warn your lordship, that if my letters have had any intrinsic recommendation, they must lose of it every day. Years and frequent returns of gout have made a ruin of me. Dullness, in the form of indolence, grows upon me. I am inactive, lifeless, and so indifferent to most things, that I neither inquire after nor remember any topics that might enliven my letters. Nothing is so insipid as my way of passing my time. But I need not specify what my letters speak.—They can have no spirit left—and would be perfectly inanimate, if attachment and gratitude to your lordship were as liable to be extinguished by old age as our more amusing qualities. I make no new connections; but cherish those that remain with all the warmth of youth and the piety of grey hairs.

The weather here has been, and is, with very few intervals, sultry to this moment. I think it has been of service to me; though by overheating myself I had a few days of lameness. The harvest is half over already all round us, and so pure, that not a poppy or cornflower is to be seen. Every field seems to have been weeded like B*****'s bowling-green. If Ceres, who is at least as old as many of our fashionable ladies, loves tricking herself out in flowers as they do, she must be mortified; and with more reason; for she looks well always with top-knots of ultramarine and vermillion, which modern goddesses do not for half so long as they think they do. As Providence showers so many blessings on us, I wish the peace may confirm them! Necessary I am sure it was—and when it cannot restore us, where should we have been had the war continued? Of our situation and prospect I confess my opinion is melancholy—not from present politics but from past. We flung away the most brilliant

position—I doubt, for a long season ! With politics I have totally done. I wish the present ministers may last ; for I think better of their principles than of those of their opponents (with a few salvos on both sides), and so I do of their abilities.—But it would be folly in me to concern myself about new generations.—How little a way can I see of their progress !

I am rather surprised at the new countess of * * * *. How could a woman be ambitious of resembling Prometheus, to be pawed and clawed and gnawed by a vulture ? I beg your earl-dom's pardon ; but I could not conceive that a coronet was so very tempting !

Lady Browne is quite recovered—unless she relapses from what we suffer at Twickenham-park from a lord N * * * *, an old sea-man, who is come to Richmond on a visit to the duke of Mon-trose. I think the poor man must be out of his senses—at least he talks us out of ours. It is the most incessant and incoherent rhapsody that ever was heard. He sits by the card-table, and pours on Mrs. N * * * * all that ever happened in his voyages or his memory. He details the ship's allowance, and talks to her as if she was his first mate. Then in the mornings he carries his daughter to town, to see St. Paul's, and the Tower, and West-minster-abbey ; and at night disgorges all he has seen ; till we don't know the ace of spades from queen Elizabeth's pocket-pistol in the armoury. Mercy on us !—And mercy on your lordship too ! Why should you be stunned with that alarum ? Have you had your earthquake, my lord ? I assure you I have had mine. Above a week ago, when broad awake, the doors of the cabinet by my bed-side rattled, without a breath of wind. I imagined somebody was walking on the leads, or had broken into the room under me. It was between four and five in the morning. I rang my bell. Before my servant could come, it happened again, and was exactly like the horizontal tremor I felt from the earthquake some years ago. As I had rung once, it was plain I was awake. I rang again ; but heard nothing more. I am quite persuaded there was some commotion ; nor is it surprising, that the dreadful eruption of fire on the coasts of Italy and Sicily¹ should have

¹ In the year 1783, a series of violent earthquakes occurred in Calabria and Sicily. The first occurred in February, when the city of Casal Nuova was entirely swallowed up ; and the princess Gerace Grimaldi, with more than four thousand persons, perished in an instant. The inhabitants of

occasioned some alteration that has extended faintly hither, and contributed to the heats and mists that have been so extraordinary. George Montague said of our last earthquake, that it was so tame you might have stroked it. It is comfortable to live where one can reason on them without dreading them! What satisfaction should you have in having erected such a monument of your taste, my lord, as Wentworth-castle, if you did not know but it might be overturned in a moment and crush you? Sir William Hamilton is expected: he has been groping in all those devastations.—Of all vocations, I would not be a professor of earthquakes! I prefer studies that are *couleur de rose*—nor would ever think of calamities, if I can do nothing to relieve them. Yet this is a weakness of mind that I do not defend. They are more respectable, who can behold philosophically the great theatre of events, or rather this little theatre of ours! In some ampler sphere, they may look on the catastrophe of Messina² as we do on kicking to pieces an ant-hill.

Bless me! what a farrago is my letter! It is like the extracts of books in a monthly magazine. I had no right to censure poor lord N * * * 's ramblings! Lady Strafford will think he has infected me. Good-night, my dear lord and lady!

Your ever devoted.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 15, 1783.

THE address from the Volunteers is curious indeed, and upon the first face a little Irish. What! would they throw off our parliament, and yet amend it? It is like correcting a question in the house of commons, and then voting against it. But I suppose they rather mean to increase confusion here, that we may not be at leisure to impede their progress—at least this may be the intention of the leaders. Large bodies are only led by being

Scylla, who, headed by their prince, had descended from the rock, and taken refuge on the sea-shore, were all washed away by an enormous wave, on its return from the land which it had inundated. [Ed.]

² Messina, and all the northern parts of Sicily, suffered greatly by the convulsions of nature alluded to in the preceding note. [Ed.]

in earnest themselves, when their leaders are not so:—but my head is not clear enough to apply it to different matters—nor could I do any good if it were. Our whole system is become a disjointed chaos—and time must digest it—or blow it up shortly.—I see no way into it—nor expect any thing favourable but from chance, that often stops confusion on a sudden. To restore us by any system, it would require a single head furnished with wisdom, temper, address, fortitude, full and undivided power, and sincere patriotism, divested of all personal views. Where is that prodigy to be found?—and how should it have the power, if it had all the rest? And if it had the power, how could it be divested of that power again? And if it were not, how long would it retain its virtues? Power and wisdom would soon unite, like Antony and Augustus, to annihilate their colleague virtue, for being a poor creature like Lepidus. In short, the mass of matter is too big for me: I am going out of the world, and cannot trouble myself about it. I do think of your part in it, and wish to preserve you where you are, for the benefits that you may contribute. I have a high opinion of Mr. F., and believe that by frankness you may become real friends, which would be greatly advantageous to the country. There is no competition in my mind where you are concerned: but F. is the minister with whom I most wish you united—indeed, to all the rest I am indifferent or adverse; but, besides his superior abilities, he has a liberality of acting that is to my taste: it is like my father's plainness, and has none of the paltry little finesses of a statesman.

Your parties do not tempt me, because I am not well enough to join in them: nor yet will they stop me, though I had rather find only you and lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer. I am not seriously ill—nay, am better upon the whole than I was last year: but I perceive decays enough in myself to be sensible that the scale may easily be inclined to the worst side. This observation makes me very indifferent to every thing that is not much at my heart. Consequently what concerns you is, as it has always been for above forty years, a principal object. Adieu!

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 12, 1783.

YOUR lordship tells me you hope my summer has glided pleasantly, like our Thames. I cannot say it has passed very pleasantly to me, though, like the Thames, dry and low; for somehow or other I caught a rheumatic fever in the great heats, and cannot get rid of it. I have just been at Park-place and Nuneham, in hopes change of air would cure me; but to no purpose. Indeed, as want of sleep is my chief complaint, I doubt I must make use of a very different and more disagreeable remedy, the air of London, the only place that I ever find agree with me when I am out of order. I was there for two nights, a fortnight ago, and slept perfectly well. In vain has my predilection for Strawberry made me try to persuade myself that this was all fancy; but I fear, reasons that appear strong, though contrary to our inclinations, must be good ones. London at this time of year is as nauseous a drug as any in an apothecary's shop. I could find nothing at all to do, and so went to Astley's, which indeed was much beyond my expectation. I do not wonder any longer that Darius was chosen king by the instructions he gave to his horse; nor that Caligula made his consul. Astley can make his dance minuets and hornpipes; which is more extraordinary than to make them vote at an election, or act the part of a magistrate, which animals of less capacities can perform as dexterously as a returning officer or a master in chancery.—But I shall not have even Astley now. Her majesty the queen of France, who has as much taste as Caligula, has sent for the whole *dramatis personæ* to Paris.¹

Sir William Hamilton² was found at Park-place, and gave us

¹ Marie Antoinette is said to have been so much struck with the good looks and graceful performance of the younger Astley, as to have him christened the "Rose of Paris." [Ed.]

² Sir William Hamilton, who had as great a passion for the study of "volcanoes" as George Selwyn for witnessing the executions of distinguished criminals, had an ample opportunity of indulging his peculiar taste, having been for nearly forty years the British ambassador at the court of Naples. He published an 8vo. volume in 1774, entitled, "Observations on Volcanoes;" and in 1776-9, "Campi Phlegrei: Observations, in English and

dreadful accounts of Calabria: he looks much older, and has the patina of a bronze.

At Nuneham I was much pleased with the improvements both within doors and without. Mr. Mason was there; and as he shines in every art, was assisting Mrs. Harcourt with his new discoveries in painting, by which he will unite miniature and oil. Indeed, she is a very apt and extraordinary scholar. Since our professors seem to have lost the art of colouring, I am glad at least that they have ungraduated assessors.

We have plenty and peace at last; consequently leisure for repairing some of our losses, if we have sense enough to set about the task. On what will happen I shall make no conjectures, as it is not likely I should see much of what is to come. Our enemies have humbled us enough to content them; and we have succeeded so ill in innovations, that surely we shall not tempt new storms in haste.

From this place I can send your lordship nothing new or entertaining, nor expect more game in town, whither nothing but search of health should carry me. Perhaps it is a vain chace at my age; but at my age one cannot trust to nature's operating cures without aiding her; it is always time enough to abandon one's self when no care will palliate our decays. I hope your lordship and lady Strafford will long be in no want of such attentions; nor should I have talked so much of my own cracks, had I had any thing else to tell you. It would be silly to aim at vivacity when it is gone: and though a lively old man is sometimes an agreeable being, a pretending old man is ridiculous. Aches and an apothecary cannot give one genuine spirits; 'tis sufficient if they do not make one peevish. Your lordship is so kind as to accept of me as I am, and you shall find nothing more counterfeit in me than the sincere respect and gratitude with which I have the honour to be

Your lordship's most devoted humble servant.

French, on the Volcanoes of the Two Sicilies," in three folio volumes. Sir William is, however, better known by his *Antiquarian Researches*, of which the "Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases, by Tischbein," will always remain a splendid monument. He died in London, 6th April 1803. [Ed.]

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 11, 1783.

My rheumatism, I thank your lordship, is certainly better, though not quite gone. It was very troublesome at night, till I took the bark ; but that medicine makes me sleep like opium—— But I will say no more about it ; nothing is so troublesome as to talk of chronical complaints : has one any right to draw on the compassion of others, when one must renew the address daily and for months ?

The aspect of Ireland is very tempestuous.¹ I doubt they will hurt us materially without benefiting themselves. If they obtain very short parliaments, they will hurt themselves more than us, by introducing a confusion that will prevent their improvements. —Whatever country does adopt short parliaments, will, I am entirely persuaded, be forced to recur to their former practice— I mean, if the disorders introduced do not produce despotism of some sort or other. I am very sorry Mr. Mason concurs in trying to revive the associations. Methinks our state is so deplorable, that every healing measure ought to be attempted instead of innovations. For my own part, I expect nothing but distractions, and am not concerned to be so old. *I am* so old, that were I disposed to novelties, I should think they little became my age. I should be ashamed, when my hour shall come, to be caught in a riot of country 'squires and parsons, and haranguing a mob with a shaking head. A leader of faction ought to be young and vigorous. If an aged gentleman does get an ascendant, he may be sure that younger men are counting on his exit, and only flatter him to succeed to his influence, while they are laughing at his misplaced activity. At least, these would be my thoughts, who of all things dread being a jest to the juvenile, if they find me out of my sphere.

¹ The Volunteer corps of Ireland had long entertained projects for reforming the parliamentary representation of that country, and had appointed delegates to further the carrying that object into effect. In September 1783, they met at Dungannon, when a plan of reform was proposed and agreed upon, and the 10th November following fixed upon for a convention at Dublin of the representatives of the whole body of Volunteers. [Ed.]

I have seen lord C * * * * 's play, and it has a great deal of merit—perhaps more than your lordship would expect. The language and images are the best part, after the two principal scenes, which are really fine.

I did, as your lordship knows and says, always like and esteem lady F * * *. I scarce know my lord; but from what I have heard of him in the House of Lords, have conceived a good opinion of his sense: of his character I never heard any ill—which is a great testimonial in his favour, when there are so many horrid characters, and when all that are conspicuous have their minutest actions tortured to depose against them.

You may be sure, my dear lord, that I heartily pity lady Strafford's and your loss of four-legged friends. Sense and fidelity are wonderful recommendations; and when one meets with them, and can be confident that one is not imposed upon, I cannot think that the two additional legs are any drawback. At least I know that I have had friends who would never have vexed or betrayed me, if they had walked on all-fours.

I have no news to send your lordship—indeed I inquire for none, nor wish to hear any. Whence is any good to come? I am every day surprised at hearing people eager for news. If there is any, they are sure of hearing it. How can one be curious to know one does not know what—and perpetually curious to know? Has one nothing to do but to hear and relate something new?—And why can one care about nothing but what one does not know?—And why is every event worth hearing, only because one has not heard it? Have not there been changes enough? divorces enough? bankruptcies and robberies enough?—and above all, lies enough?—No; or people would not be every day impatient for the newspaper. I own, I am glad on Sunday when there is no paper, and no fresh lies circulating.² Adieu, my good lord and lady! May you long enjoy your tranquillity, undisturbed by villainy, folly, and madness!

Your most faithful servant.

² What would Walpole say, could he witness the alteration in this respect between the years 1783 and 1836, when the number of Sunday newspapers is tenfold greater than that of daily ones? [Ed.]

TO GOVERNOR POWNALL.¹

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 27, 1783.

I AM extremely obliged to you, sir, for the valuable communication made to me. It is extremely so to me, as it does justice to a memory I revere to the highest degree; and, I flatter myself, that it would be acceptable to that part of the world that loves truth—and that part will be the majority, as fast as *they* pass away who have an interest in preferring falsehood. Happily, truth is longer-lived than the passions of individuals; and, when mankind are not misled, they can distinguish white from black. I myself do not pretend to be unprejudiced; I must be so to the best of fathers; I should be ashamed to be quite impartial. No wonder then, sir, if I am greatly pleased with so able a justification: yet, I am not so blinded, but that I can discern solid reasons for admiring your defence. You have placed that defence on sound and *new* ground, and, though very briefly, have very learnedly stated and distinguished the land-marks of our constitution, and the encroachments made on it, by justly referring the principles of liberty to the Saxon system, and by imputing the corruptions of it to the Norman. This was a great deal too deep for that superficial mountebank Hume to go—for a mountebank he was. He mounted a system in the garb of a philosophic empiric, but dispensed no drugs but what he was authorised to vend by a royal patent, and which were full of Turkish opium. He had studied nothing relative to the English constitution before queen Elizabeth, and had selected her most arbitrary acts to countenance those of the Stuarts; and even hers he misrepresented; for her worst deeds were levelled against the nobility, those of the Stuarts against the people. Hers, consequently, were rather an obligation to the people; for the most heinous part of despotism is, that it produces a thousand despots instead of one. Muley Moloch cannot lop off many heads with his own hands—at least, he takes those in his way, those of his courtiers—but his bashaws and viceroys spread destruction every where.—The flimsy, ignorant, blundering manner in which Hume

¹ For Biographical Notice of Governor Pownall, see Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. viii. p. 61. [Or.]

executed the reigns preceding Henry VII. is a proof how little he had examined the history of our constitution.—I could say much more, sir, in commendation of your work, were I not apprehensive of being biassed by the subject. Still, that it would not be from flattery, I will prove, by taking the liberty of making two objections; and they are only to the last page but one. Perhaps you will think that my first objection does show that I am too much biassed.—I own I am sorry to see my father compared to Sylla. The latter was a sanguinary usurper, a monster—the former, the mildest, most forgiving, best-natured of men, and a *legal* minister. Nor, I fear, will the only light in which you compare them, stand the test. Sylla resigned his power, voluntarily, insolently—perhaps timidly, as he might think he had a better chance of dying in his bed, if he retreated, than by continuing to rule by force. My father did not retire by his own option. He had lost the majority of the House of Commons. Sylla, you say, sir, retired unimpeached—it is true, but covered with blood. My father was not *impeached*, in our strict sense of the word; but, to my great joy, he was in effect. A secret committee, a worse inquisition than a jury, was named—not to try him—but to sift his life for crimes—and out of such a jury, chosen in the dark, and not one of them he might challenge, he had some determined enemies, many opponents, and but two he could suppose his friends. And what was the consequence? A man charged with every state crime almost, for twenty years, was proved to have done—what? Paid some writers much more than they deserved, for having defended him against ten thousand and ten thousand libels (some of which had been written by his inquisitors), all which libels were confessed to have been lies by his inquisitors themselves—for they could not produce a shadow of one of the crimes with which they had charged him! I must own, sir, I think that Sylla and my father ought to be set in opposition rather than paralleled. My other objection is still more serious; and if I am so happy as to convince you, I shall hope that you will alter the paragraph, as it seems to impute something to sir Robert, of which he was not only most innocent, but of which, if he had been guilty, I should think him extremely so, for he would have been very ungrateful. You say he had not the comfort to see that he had established his own family by any thing which he received from the gratitude of that

Hanover family, or from the gratitude of that country, which he had saved and served!—Good sir, what does this sentence seem to imply, but that either sir Robert himself, or his family, thought, or think, that the kings George I. and II., or England, were ungrateful in not rewarding his services?—Defend him and us from such a charge! He, nor we, ever had such a thought. Was it not rewarding him to make him prime minister, and maintain and support him against his enemies for twenty years together? Did not George I. make his eldest soon a peer,² and give to the father and son a valuable patent place in the Custom-house for three lives? Did not George II. give my elder brother the Auditor's place, and to my brother and me, other rich places for our lives—for, though in the gift of the first lord of the treasury, do we not owe them to the king who made him so? Did not the late king make my father an earl, and dismiss him with a pension of £4,000 a-year for his life? Could he, or we, not think these ample rewards? What rapacious sordid wretches must he and we have been, and be, could we entertain such an idea! As far have we all been from thinking him neglected by his country. Did not his country see and know these rewards? and could it think these rewards inadequate? Besides, sir, great as I hold my father's services, they were solid and silent, not ostensible. They were of a kind to which I hold your justification a more suitable reward than pecuniary recompenses. To have fixed the house of Hanover on the throne, to have maintained this country in peace and affluence for twenty years, with the other services you record, sir, were actions, the *éclat* of which must be illustrated by time and reflection; and whose splendour has been brought forwarder than I wish it had, by comparison

² Robert, second earl of Orford, who was created, during his father's lifetime (10th June 1723) Baron Walpole, of Walpole, county Norfolk, with remainder, in default of the issue male of himself and his father, to the male descendants of his grandfather. On the death of Horace Walpole, who had succeeded to the earldom of Orford on the death of his nephew, George, third earl, son of the above-named Robert, all the honour of the family expired except this barony, which devolved, according to the limitation, upon his first cousin, Horatio, second lord Walpole, of Wolterton, a son of Horatio, first lord, so created 4th June 1756, and who was the brother of the first earl of Orford. The said Horatio, second lord Walpole, of Wolterton, was, however, created earl of Orford 1st April 1806, and was the grandfather of the present earl. [Ed.]

with a period very dissimilar ! If sir Robert had not the comfort of leaving his family in affluence, it was not imputable to his king or his country. Perhaps, I am proud that he did not. He died forty thousand pounds in debt. That was the wealth of a man that had been taxed as the plunderer of his country ! Yet, with all my adoration of my father, I am just enough to own that it was his own fault if he died so poor. He had made Houghton much too magnificent for the moderate estate which he left to support it; and, as he never, I repeat it with truth, *never* got any money but in the South Sea and while he was paymaster, his fondness for his paternal seat, and his boundless generosity, were too expensive for his fortune. I will mention one instance, which will show how little he was disposed to turn the favour of the crown to his own profit. He laid out fourteen thousand pounds of his own money on Richmond New Park.³ I could produce other reasons, too, why sir Robert's family were not in so comfortable a situation, as the world, deluded by misrepresentation, might expect to see them at his death.—My eldest brother had been a very bad economist during his father's life, and died himself fifty thousand pounds in debt, or more; so that to this day neither sir Edward nor I have received the five thousand pounds a-piece which sir Robert left us as our fortunes. I do not love to charge the dead; therefore, will only say, that lady Orford (reckoned a vast fortune, which till she died she never proved) wasted vast sums; nor did my brother or father *ever* receive but the twenty thousand pounds which she brought at first, and which were spent on the wedding and christening; I mean, including her jewels.

I beg pardon, sir, for this tedious detail, which is minutely, perhaps too minutely, true; but, when I took the liberty of contesting any part of a work which I admire so much, I owed it to you and to myself to assign my reasons. I trust they will satisfy you; and, if they do, I am sure you will alter a paragraph, against which it is the duty of the family to exclaim. Dear as my father's memory is to my soul, I can never subscribe to the position

³ Perhaps, it was from the delight which Richmond Park afforded to her, that queen Caroline wished to enclose St. James's and to convert it into a noble garden for the palace. This project, whatever might have given rise to it, she certainly entertained, and asked sir Robert Walpole "What it might probably cost?" "*Only three crowns,*" was the significant reply. [Ed.]

that he was unrewarded by the house of Hanover. I have the honour to be, sir, with great respect and gratitude,

Your most obliged and obedient humble servant.

P.S. I did not take the liberty of retaining your essay, sir ; but should be very happy to have a copy of it at your leisure.

TO GOVERNOR POWNALL.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 7, 1783.

YOU must allow me, sir, to repeat my thanks for the second copy of your tract on my father, and for your great condescension in altering the two passages to which I presumed to object ; and which are not only more consonant to exactness, but, I hope, no disparagement to the piece. To me they are quite satisfactory. And it is a comfort to me, too, that what I begged to have changed was not any reflection prejudicial to his memory ; but, in the first point, a parallel not entirely similar in circumstances ; and, in the other, a sort of censure on others to which I could not subscribe. With all my veneration for my father's memory, I should not remonstrate against just censure on him. Happily, to do justice to him, most iniquitous calumnies ought to be removed ; and then there would remain virtues and merits enough, far to outweigh human errors, from which the best of men, like him, cannot be exempt. Let his enemies, aye and his *friends*, be compared with him—and then justice would be done ! Your Essay, sir, will, I hope, some time or other, clear the way to his vindication. It points out the true way of examining his character ; and is itself, as far as it goes, unanswerable. As such, what an obligation it must be to, sir,

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 10, 1783.

IF I consulted my reputation as a writer, which your lordship's partiality is so kind as to allot me, I should wait a few days till my granary is fuller of stock, which probably it would

be by the end of next week—but, in truth, I had rather be a grateful, and consequently a punctual correspondent, than an ingenious one; as I value the honour of your lordship's friendship more than such tinsel bits of fame as can fall to my share, and of which I am particularly sick at present, as the *Public Advertiser* dressed me out t'other day with a heap of that dross, which he had pillaged from some other strolling playwrights, who I did not desire should be plundered for me.

Indeed, when the parliament does meet, I doubt, nay hope, it will make less sensation than usual. The orators of Dublin have brought the flowers of Billingsgate to so high perfection, that ours comparatively will have no more scent than a dead dandelion. If your lordship has not seen the speeches of Mr. F * * * and Mr. G. * * *, you may perhaps still think that our oyster-women can be more abusive than members of parliament.

Since I began my letter, I hear that the meeting of the delegates from the volunteers is adjourned to the first of February.¹ This seems a very favourable circumstance. I don't like a reformation began by a Popish army! Indeed, I did hope that peace would bring us peace, at least not more than the discords incidental to a free government: but we seem not to have attained that era yet! I hope it will arrive, though I may not see it. I shall not easily believe that any radical alteration of a constitution that preserved us so long and carried us to so great a height, will recover our affairs. There is a wide difference between correcting abuses, and removing landmarks. Nobody disliked more than I the strides that were attempted towards increasing the prerogative; but as the excellence of our constitution above all others, consists in the balance established between the three powers of king, lords, and commons, I wish to see that equilibrium preserved. No single man, nor any private junto, has a right to dictate laws to all three. In Ireland, truly, a still worse spirit I apprehend to be at bottom—in short, it is phrenzy or folly to suppose that an army composed of three parts of Catholics can be intended for any good purposes.

¹ They assembled at Dublin on the 10th November, when a plan of reform was produced and considered by them; and on the following day Mr. Flood moved, in the House of Commons, for leave to bring in a bill for the more equal representation of the people in parliament, when his motion was rejected by 157 votes to 77. [Ed.]

These are my sentiments, my dear lord, and, you know, very disinterested. For myself, I have nothing to wish but ease and tranquillity for the rest of my time. I have no enmities to avenge. I do hope the present administration will last, as I believe there are *more* honest men in it, than in any set that could replace them, though I have not a grain of partiality more than I had for their associates. Mr. Fox I think by far the ablest and soundest head in England, and am persuaded that the more he is tried the greater man he will appear.

Perhaps it is impertinent to trouble your lordship with my creed—it is certainly of no consequence to any body—but I have nothing else that could entertain you—and at so serious a crisis, can one think of trifles? In general, I am not sorry that the nation is most disposed to trifle—the less it takes part, the more leisure will the ministers have to attend to the most urgent points. When so many individuals assume to be legislators, it is lucky that very few obey their institutes.

I rejoice to hear of lady Strafford's good health, and am her and your lordship's

Most faithful humble servant.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 11, 1783.

YOUR lordship is so partial to me and my idle letters, that I am afraid of writing them—not lest they should sink below the standard you have pleased to affix to them in your own mind, but from fear of being intoxicated into attempting to keep them up to it, which would destroy their only merit, their being written naturally and without pretensions. Gratitude and good breeding compel me to make due answers; but I entreat your lordship to be assured, that however vain I am of your favour, my only aim is to preserve the honour of your friendship; that it is all the praise I ask or wish; and that, with regard to letter-writing, I am firmly persuaded that it is a province in which women will always shine superiorly; for our sex is too jealous of the reputation of good sense, to condescend to hazard a thousand trifles and negligences, which give grace, ease, and familiarity to correspondence.

—I will say no more on that subject, for I feel that I am on the brink of a dissertation—and though that fault would prove the truth of my proposition, I will not punish your lordship, only to convince you that I am in the right.

The winter is not dull or disagreeable: on the contrary, it is pleasing, as the town is occupied on general subjects, and not, as is too common, on private scandal, private vices, and follies. The India bill,¹ air-balloons,² Vestris, and the automaton, share all attention. Mrs. Siddons,³ as less a novelty, does not engross all conversation. If abuse still keeps above par, it confines itself to its prescriptive province, the ministerial line. In that walk it has tumbled a little into the kennel—The low buffoonery of lord * * *, in laying the caricatura of the Coalition on the table of your lordship's house, has levelled it to Sadler's Wells; and Mr. * * *, the pillar of invective, does not promise to re-erect it—not, I conclude, from want of having imported a stock of ingredients, but his presumptuous debut on the very night of his entry was so wretched, and delivered in so barbarous a brogue, that I question whether he will ever recover the blow Mr. Courtenay gave him. A young man may correct and improve, and rise from a first fall; but an elderly formed speaker has not an equal chance. Mr. H * * *, lord A * * * 's heir, but by no means so laconic, had more success. Though his first essay, it was not at all dashed by bashfulness—and though he might have blushed for discovering so much personal rancour to Mr. Fox, he rather seemed to be impatient to discharge it.

¹ The India Bill, brought in by Fox. [Ed.]

² Balloons now formed a subject of great public interest. Pilater de Rozier, the superintendant of the Royal Museum of Paris, who had joined Montgolfier in constructing a balloon seventy-four feet in height, and forty-eight in breadth, ventured to make the first ascent in October 1783, though only to the height of fifty feet, the balloon being fastened by cords, and soon drawn down. On the 21st November following, de Rozier ascended, with the marquis d'Arlander, from the Chateau la Muette, in a machine containing 6,000 cubic feet; and having remained up about twenty-five minutes, descended at about five miles from La Muette. Another ascent was made from the gardens of the Tuilleries, on the 1st December, by Messrs. Charles and Robert, who descended at Nesle. [Ed.]

³ This splendid actress had made her debut, properly speaking, on the 10th October 1782, at Drury-lane, in the character of Isabella. Her performance of second-rate characters there some years previously, can scarcely be looked upon as deserving of being so designated. [Ed.]

Your lordship sees in the papers, that the two houses of Ireland have firmly resisted the innovations of the volunteers. Indeed it was time for the protestant proprietors to make their stand; for though the catholics behave decently, it would be into their hands that the prize would fall. The delegates, it is true, have sent over a most loyal address—but I wish their actions may not contradict their words! Mr. * * * *’s discomfiture here will, I suppose, carry him back to a field wherein his wicked spirit may have more effect. It is a very serious moment!—I am in pain lest your county, my dear lord (you know what I mean), should countenance such pernicious designs.

I am impatient for next month, for the pleasure of seeing your lordship and lady Strafford, and am of both

The devoted humble servant

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Wednesday, May 5, 1784.

YOUR cherries, for aught I know, may, like Mr. Pitt, be half ripe before others are in blossom; but at Twickenham, I am sure, I could find dates and pomegranates on the quickset hedges as soon as a cherry in swaddling-clothes on my walls. The very leaves on the horse-chestnuts are little snotty-nosed things, that cry and are afraid of the north wind, and cling to the bough as if *Old Poker*¹ was coming to take them away. For my part, I have seen nothing like spring but a chimney-sweeper’s garland; and yet I have been three days in the country—and the consequence was, that I was glad to come back to town. I do not wonder that you feel differently; any thing is warmth and verdure, when compared to poring over memorials. In truth, I think you much happier for being out of parliament. You could do no good there; you have no views of ambition to satisfy:—and when neither duty nor ambition calls (I do not condescend to name avarice, which never is to be satisfied, nor deserves to be

¹ The reader, who may be desirous of knowing something more of this domestic spirit, who is obviously closely allied to the “Old Bogy” of modern nurseries, and the “Puck” of olden times, is referred to the Quarterly Review, vol. 22, p. 360. [Ed.]

reasoned with, nor has any place in your breast), I cannot conceive what satisfaction an elderly man can have in listening to the passions or follies of others: nor is eloquence such a banquet, when one knows that, whoever the cooks are, whatever the sauces, one has eaten as good beef or mutton before—and, perhaps, as well dressed. It is surely time to live for one's self, when one has not a vast while to live; and you, I am persuaded, will live the longer for leading a country life. How much better to be planting, nay, making experiments on smoke (if not too dear), than reading applications from officers, a quarter of whom you could not serve, nor content three quarters! You had not time for necessary exercise; and, I believe, would have blinded yourself. In short, if you will live in the air all the day, be totally idle, and not read or write a line by candle-light, and retrench your suppers, I shall rejoice in your having nothing to do but that dreadful punishment, pleasing yourself. Nobody has any claims on you; you have satisfied every point of honour; you have no cause for being particularly grateful to the opposition; and you want no excuse for living for yourself. Your resolutions on economy are not only prudent, but just; and, to say the truth, I believe, that if you had continued at the head of the army, you would have ruined yourself. You have too much generosity to have curbed yourself; and would have had too little time to attend to doing so. I know, by myself, how pleasant it is to have laid up a little for those I love, for those that depend on me, and for old servants. Moderate wishes may be satisfied—and, which is still better, are less liable to disappointment. I am not preaching, nor giving advice, but congratulating you: and it is certainly not being selfish, when I rejoice at your being thrown by circumstances into a retired life, though it will occasion my seeing less of you. But I have always preferred what was most for your own honour and happiness; and, as you taste satisfaction already, it will not diminish, for they are the first moments of passing from a busy life to a quiet one that are the most irksome. You have the felicity of being able to amuse yourself with what the grave world calls trifles; but as gravity does not happen to be wisdom, trifles are full as important as what is respected as serious; and more amiable, as generally more innocent. Most men are bad or ridiculous, sometimes both: at least my experience tells me what my reading had told me

before, that they are so in a great capital of a sinking country. If immortal fame is his object, a Cato may die—but he will do no good. If only the preservation of his virtue had been his point, he might have lived comfortably at Athens, like Atticus—who, by the way, happens to be as immortal; though I will give him credit for having had no such view. Indeed, I look on this country as so irrecoverably on the verge of ruin, from its enormous debt, from the loss of America, from the almost as certain prospect of losing India, that my pride would dislike to be an actor when the crash may happen.

You seem to think that I might send you more news. So I might, if I would talk of elections: but those, you know, I hate, as, in general, I do all details. How Mr. Fox has recovered such a majority I do not guess; still less do I comprehend how there could be so many that had not voted, after the poll had lasted so long. Indeed, I should be sorry to understand such mysteries. Of new peers, or new elevations, I hear every day, but am quite ignorant which are to be true. Rumour always creates as many as the king, when he makes several. In fact, I do know nothing. Adieu!

P.S. The summer is come to town, but I hope is gone into the country, too.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, May 21, 1784.

I AM perfectly satisfied with your epitaph,¹ and would not have a syllable altered. It tells exactly what it means to say, and, that truth being an encomium, wants no addition or amplification. Nor do I love late language for modern facts, nor will European tongues perish since printing has been discovered. I should approve French least of all; it would be a kind of insult to the vanquished: and besides, the example of a hero should be held out to his countrymen rather than to their enemies. You must

¹ An epitaph for the monument erected by the states of Jersey to the memory of major Pearson, killed in the attack of that island by the French, in January 1781. [Or.]

take care to have the word *caused*, in the last line but one, spelt rightly, and not *caus'd*.

I know nothing of the parliament but what you saw in the papers. I came hither yesterday, and am transported, like you, with the beauty of the country; ay, and with its perfumed air, too. The *lilac-tide* scents even the insides of the rooms.

I desired lady Ailesbury to carry you lord Melcombe's Diary. It is curious, indeed, not so much from the secrets it blabs, which are rather characteristic than novel, but from the wonderful folly of the author, who was so fond of talking of himself, that he tells all he knew of himself, though scarce an event that does not betray his profligacy; and (which is still more surprising that he should disclose) almost every one exposes the contempt in which he was held, and his consequential disappointments and disgraces!—Was ever any man the better for another's experience?—What a lesson is here against versatility!

I, who have lived through all the scenes unfolded, am entertained—but I should think that to younger readers half the book must be unintelligible. He explains nothing but the circumstances of his own situation; and though he touches on many important periods, he leaves them undeveloped, and often undetermined. It is diverting to hear him rail at lord Halifax and others, for the very kind of double-dealing which he relates coolly of himself in the next page. Had he gone backwards, he might have given half a dozen volumes of his own life, with similar anecdotes and variations.

I am most surprised, that when self-love is the whole groundwork of the performance, there should be little or no attempt at shining as an author, though he was one. As he had so much wit, too, I am amazed that not a feature of it appears. The discussion in the appendix, on the late prince's question for increase of allowance, is the only part in which there is sense or honesty.

There is, in the imperfect account of Rochfort, a strong circumstance or two that pleased me much. There are many passages that will displease several others throughout.

Mr. Coxe's Travels¹ are very different: plain, clear, sensible,

² Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, interspersed with Historical Relations and Political Inquiries. By William Coxe, M. A. London, 1784; 4to.; 2 vols., with charts and engravings. A third volume

instructive, and entertaining. It is a noble work, and precious to me who delight in quartos: the two volumes contain twelve hundred pages—I have already devoured a quarter, though I have had them but three days.

[The rest of this letter is lost.]

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 25, 1784.

I CAN answer you very readily in your own tone, that is, about weather and country grievances, and without one word of news or politics, for I know neither, nor inquire of them. I am very well content to be at Strulbrug, and to *exist* after I have done *being*: and I am still better pleased that you are in the same way of thinking, or of not thinking; for I am sure both your health and your mind will find the benefits of living for yourself and family only. It were not fit that the young should concentrate themselves in so narrow a circle, nor do the young seem to have any such intention. Let them mend or mar the world as they please—the world takes its own way upon the whole; and though there may be an uncommon swarm of animalculæ for a season, things return into their own channel from their own bias, before any effectual nostrum of fumigation is discovered. In the mean time I am for giving all due weight to local grievances, though with no natural turn towards attending to them:—but they serve for conversation. We have no newly-invented grubs to eat our fruit—indeed I have no fruit to be eaten—but I should not lament if the worms would eat my gardener, who, you know, is so bad an one, that I never have any thing in my garden. I am now waiting for dry weather to cut my hay—though nature certainly never intended hay should be cut dry, as it always rains all June.—But here is a worse calamity: one is never safe by day or night: Mrs. Walsingham, who has bought your brother's late house at Ditton, was robbed a few days ago in the high road, within a mile of home, at *seven* in the evening. The *dii minorum gentium* pilfer every thing. Last night they stole a couple of yards

of this admirable work, which is one of the earliest publications of the late venerable archdeacon of Wilts, was published in 1790. [Ed.]

of lead off the pediment of the door of my cottage. A gentleman at Putney, who has three men servants, had his house broken open last week, and lost some fine miniatures, which he valued so much, that he would not hang them up. You may imagine what a pain this gives me in my baubles ! I have been making the round of my fortifications this morning, and ordering new works.

I am concerned for the account you give me of * * * * *. Life does not appear to be such a jewel as to preserve it carefully for its own sake. I think the same of its *good things* : if they do not procure amusement or comfort, I doubt they only produce the contrary.—Yet it is silly to repine ; for, probably, whatever any man does by choice, he knows will please him best, or, at least, will prevent greater uneasiness. I, therefore, rather retract my concern ; for with a vast fortune * * * * might certainly do what he would—and if, at his age, he can wish for more than that fortune will obtain, I may pity his taste or temper : but I shall think that you and I are much happier who can find enjoyments in an humbler sphere, nor envy those who have no time for trifling. I, who have never done any thing else, am not at all weary of my occupation. Even three days of continued rain have not put me out of humour or spirits. *C'est beaucoup dire* for an *Anglois*. Adieu !

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 30, 1784.

INSTEAD of coming to you, I am thinking of packing up and going to town for winter, so desperate is the weather ! I found a great fire at Mrs. Clive's this evening, and Mr. Raftor hanging over it like a smoked ham. They tell me my hay will be all spoiled for want of cutting ; but I had rather it should be destroyed by standing than by being mowed, as the former will cost me nothing but the crop, and 'tis very dear to make nothing but a water souchy of it.

You know I have lost a niece, and found another nephew : he makes the fifty-fourth, reckoning both sexes. We are certainly an affectionate family, for of late we do nothing but marry one another.

Have not you felt a little twinge in a remote corner of your heart on lady * * * 's death. She dreaded death so extremely, that I am glad she had not a moment to be sensible of it. I have a great affection for sudden deaths—they save one's self and every body else a deal of ceremony.

The duke and duchess of M * * * breakfasted here on Monday, and seemed much pleased, though it rained the whole time, with an Egyptian darkness. I should have thought there had been deluges enough to destroy all Egypt's other plagues; but the newspapers talk of locusts—I suppose relations of your beetles, though probably not so fond of green fruit; for the scene of their campaign is Queen-square, Westminster, where there certainly has not been an orchard since the reign of Canute.

I have, at last, seen an air-balloon—just as I once did see a tiny review, by passing one accidentally on Hounslow-heath. I was going last night to lady Onslow at Richmond, and over Mr. Cambridge's field I saw a bundle in the air not bigger than the moon, and she herself could not have descended with more composure, if she had expected to find Endymion fast asleep. It seemed to light on Richmond-hill; but Mrs. H*** was going by, and her *coiffeure* prevented my seeing it alight. The papers say, that a balloon has been made at Paris, representing the castle of Stockholm, in compliment to the king of Sweden: but that they were afraid to let it off—so, I suppose, it will be served up to him in a dessert. No great progress, surely, is made in these airy navigations, if they are still afraid of risking the necks of two or three subjects for the entertainment of a visiting sovereign. There is seldom a *feu de joie* for the birth of a dauphin that does not cost more lives. I thought royalty and science never haggled about the value of blood, when experiments are in question.

I shall wait for summer before I make you a visit. Though I dare to say that you have converted your smoke-kilns into a manufacture of balloons, pray do not erect a Strawberry castle in the air for my reception, if it will cost a pismire a hair of its head. Good-night!—I have ordered my bed to be heated as hot as an oven, and Tonton and I must go into it.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 6, 1784.

I AM very sorry, my dear lord, that I must answer your lordship's letter by a condolence. I had not the honour of being acquainted with Mrs. V * * *, but have heard so much good of her, that it is impossible not to lament her.

Since this month began we have had fine weather, and 'twere great pity if we had not, when the earth is covered with such abundant harvests! They talk of an earthquake having been felt in London. Had sir W. Hamilton been there he would think the town gave itself great airs. He, I believe, is *putting up* volcanoes in his own country. In my youth, philosophers were eager to ascribe every uncommon discovery to the deluge; now it is the fashion to solve every appearance by conflagrations. If there was such an inundation upon the earth, and such a furnace under it, I am amazed that Noah and company were not boiled to death. Indeed, I am a great sceptic about human reasonings; they predominate only for a time, like other mortal fashions, and are so often exploded after the mode is passed, that I hold them little more serious, though they call themselves wisdom. How many have I lived to see established and confuted! For instance, the necessity of a southern continent, as a balance, was supposed to be unanswerable—and so it was, till captain Cook found there was no such thing. We are poor silly animals: we live for an instant upon a particle of a boundless universe, and are much like a butterfly that should argue about the nature of the seasons, and what creates their vicissitudes, and does not exist itself to see one annual revolution of them!

Adieu, my dear lord!—If my reveries are foolish, remember, I give them for no better. If I depreciate human wisdom, I am sure I do not assume a grain to myself, nor have any thing to value myself upon more than being

Your lordship's most obliged humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 14, 1784.

As lady C. offers to be postman, I cannot resist writing a line, though I have not a word to say. In good sooth, I know nothing, hear of nothing but robberies and house-breaking; consequently never think of ministers, India directors, and such honest men. Mrs. Clive has been broken open, and Mr. Raftor miscarried and died of the fright. Lady * * * has lost all her liveries and her temper, and lady * * * has cried her eyes out on losing a lurch and almost her wig.—In short, as I do not love exaggeration, I do not believe there have been above threescore highway robberies within this week, fifty-seven houses that have been broken open, and two hundred and thirty that are to be stripped on the first opportunity. We are in great hopes, however, that the king of Spain,¹ now he has demolished Algiers, the metropolitan see of thieves, will come and bombard Richmond, Twickenham, Hampton-court, and all the suffragan cities that swarm with pirates and banditti, as he has a better knack at destroying vagabonds than at recovering his own.

Ireland is in a blessed way; and, as if the climate infected every body that sets foot there, the viceroy's aide-de-camps have *blundered* into a riot that will set all the humours afloat.

I wish you joy of the summer being come now it is gone, which is better than not coming at all. I hope lady C. will return with an account of your all being perfectly well. Adieu!

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 7, 1784.

THE summer is come at last, my lord, drest as fine as a birth-day, though not with so many flowers on its head. In truth,

¹ In the year 1783, Spain employed her naval force, under the command of Don Barcelo, in the bombardment of Algiers and, with the assistance of Portugal and Naples, resumed the attack upon it in the following year. [Ed.]

the sun is an old fool, who apes the modern people of fashion by arriving too late: the day is going to bed before he makes his appearance; and one has scarce time to admire his embroidery of green and gold. It was cruel to behold such expanse of corn every where, and yet see it all turned to a water-souchy. If I could admire Dante, which, asking Mr. Hayley's pardon, I do not, I would have written an olio of Jews and Pagans, and sent Ceres to reproach master Noah with breaking his promise, of the world never being drowned again.—But this last week has restored matters to their old channel; and I trust we shall have bread to eat next winter, or I think we must have lived on apples, of which to be sure there is enough to prevent a famine. This is all I know, my lord; and I hope no news to your lordship. I have exhausted the themes of air-balloons and highwaymen; and if you *will* have my letters, you must be content with my commonplace chat on the seasons. I do nothing worth repeating, nor hear that others do: and though I am content to rust myself, I should be glad to tell your lordship any thing that would amuse you. I dined two days ago at Mrs. Garrick's with sir William Hamilton, who is returning to the kingdom of cinders. Mrs. Walsingham¹ was there, with her son and daughter. He is a very pleasing young man; a fine figure; his face like hers, with something of his grandfather sir Charles Williams, without his vanity; very sensible, and uncommonly well bred. The daughter is an imitress of Mrs. Damer, and has modelled a bust of her brother. Mrs. Damer herself is modelling two masks for the key-stones of the new bridge at Henley. Sir William, who has seen them, says they are in her true antique style. I am in possession of her sleeping dogs in terra cotta. She asked me if I would consent to her executing them in marble for the duke of Richmond?—I said, Gladly; I should like they should exist in a more durable

¹ Charlotte, daughter of sir Charles Hanbury Williams, bart., married to the hon. Robert Boyle Walsingham. They had two children, a son, who died before them; and a daughter, Charlotte, married, 4th August 1791, to lord Henry Fitzgerald, third son of James, first duke of Leinster, and uncle to the present duke. The barony de Roos, which was in abeyance between the representatives of the ladies Bridget and Frances, sisters and co-heiresses of Francis, sixth duke of Rutland, and eighteenth baron de Roos, was called out of abeyance, in her favour, in 1806, when she became baroness de Roos; on whose death, on the 9th January 1831, Henry William, the present lord, her eldest son, succeeded to the title. [Ed.]

material—but I would not part with the original, which is sharper and more alive. Mr. Wyat the architect saw them here lately; and said, he was sure that if the idea was given to the best statuary in Europe, he would not produce so perfect a groupe. Indeed, with these dogs and the riches I possess by lady Di,² poor Strawberry may vie with much prouder collections.

Adieu, my good lord! when I fold up a letter I am ashamed of it—but it is your own fault. The last thing I should think of would be troubling your lordship with such insipid stuff, if you did not command it. Lady Strafford will bear me testimony how often I have protested against it.

I am her ladyship's and your lordship's
obedient humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 15, 1784.

As I have heard nothing from you, I flatter myself lady A. mends, or I think you would have brought her again to the physicians: you will, I conclude, next week, as towards the end of it the ten days they named will be expired. I must be in town myself about Thursday on some little business of my own.

As I was writing this, my servants called me away to see a balloon—I suppose Blanchard's, that was to be let off from Chelsea this morning. I saw it from the common field before the window of my round tower. It appeared about a third of the size of the moon, or less, when setting, something above the tops of the trees on the level horizon. It was then descending; and, after rising and declining a little, it sunk slowly behind the trees, I should think about or beyond Sunbury, at five minutes after one. But you know I am a very inexact guesser at measures and distances, and may be mistaken in many miles; and you know how little I have attended to those *airgonauts*: only t'other night I diverted myself with a sort of meditation on future *airgonation*, supposing that it will not only be perfected, but will depose navigation. I did not finish it, because I am not skilled, like the

² The number of original drawings by Lady Diana Beauclerc, at Strawberry-hill. [Or.]

gentleman that used to write political ship-news, in that style, which I wanted to perfect my essay: but in the prelude I observed how ignorant the ancients were in supposing Icarus melted the wax of his wings by too near access to the sun, whereas he would have been frozen to death before he made the first post on that road. Next I discovered an alliance between bishop Wilkins's art of flying and his plan of an universal language; the latter of which he no doubt calculated to prevent the want of an interpreter when he should arrive at the moon.

But I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our seaports to become *deserted villages*, and Salisbury-plain, Newmarket-heath (another canvass for alteration of ideas), and all downs (but *the Downs*) arising into dock-yards for aerial vessels. Such a field would be ample in furnishing new speculations.—But to come to my ship-news.

The good balloon Dædalus, capt. Wing-ate, will fly in a few days for China; he will stop at the top of the Monument to take in passengers.

Arrived on Brand-sands, the Vulture, capt. Nabob; the Tortoise, Snow, from Lapland; the * * * * *, from Versailles; the Dreadnought, from mount Etna, sir W. Hamilton, commander; the Tympany, Montgolfier; and the * * * * *, from the Cape of Good Hope. Foundered in a hurricane, the Bird of Paradise, from mount Ararat. The Bubble, Sheldon, took fire, and was burnt to her gallery; and the Phoenix is to be cut down to a second-rate.—In those days Old Sarum will again be a town, and have houses in it. There will be fights in the air with wind-guns and bows and arrows; and there will be prodigious increase of land for tillage, especially in France, by breaking up all public roads as useless. But enough of my fooleries, for which I am sorry you must pay double postage.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 13, 1784.

THANK you a thousand times, dear madam, for your obliging letter and the new *Bristol stones* you have sent me, which would

pass on a more skilful lapidary than I am for having been brillianted by a professed artist, if you had not told me that they came shining out of a native mine, and had no foreign diamond-dust to polish them. Indeed can one doubt any longer that Bristol is as rich and warm a soil as India? I am convinced it has been so of late years, though I question its having been so luxuriant in alderman Canning's days; and I have MORE reasons for thinking so, than from the marvels of Chatterton.—But I will drop metaphors, lest some nabob should take me *au pied de la lettre*, fit out an expedition, plunder your city, and massacre you for weighing *too many carats*.

Seriously, madam, I am surprised—and chiefly at the kind of genius of this unhappy female.¹ Her ear, as you remark, is perfect—but that being a gift of nature, amazes me less. Her expressions are more exalted than poetic; and discover taste, as you say, rather than discover flights of fancy and wild ideas, as one should expect. I should therefore advise her quitting blank verse, which wants the highest colouring to distinguish it from prose; whereas her taste, and probably good sense, might give sufficient beauty to her rhymes.

Her not being learned is another reason against her writing in blank verse. Milton employed all his reading, nay all his geographic knowledge, to enrich his language—and succeeded. They who have imitated him in that particular, have been mere monkeys; and they who neglected it, flat and poor.

Were I not persuaded by the samples you have sent me, madam, that this woman has talents, I should not advise her encouraging her propensity, lest it should divert her from the care of her family, and, after the novelty is over, leave her worse than she was. When the late queen patronised Stephen Duck,²

¹ Mrs. Yearsley, the milkwoman of Bristol, whose talent was discovered by Mrs. Hannah More, who solicited for her the protection of Mrs. Montague, in a prefatory letter prefixed to her poems, published in quarto, 1785. Mrs. Yearsley died at Melksham, Wilts, 8th May 1806. [Ed.]

² Stephen Duck, the thrasher, born at Charlton, Wilts, at which place he is still commemorated by an anniversary, called Thresher's Feast. After receiving a very limited education, he filled the lowest employments of a country life; but, while engaged in these, indulged a predilection for poetry which he had felt from his earliest youth. Some of these poetical attempts falling into the hands of a lady attached to the person of queen Caroline, her majesty took him under her protection, and allowed him a small annual

who was only a wonder at first, and had not genius enough to support the character he had promised, twenty artisans and labourers turned poets, and starved. Your poetess can scarce be more miserable than she is, and even the reputation of being an authoress may procure her customers: but as poetry is one of your least excellences, madam, (your virtues will forgive me), I am sure you will not only give her counsels for her works, but for her conduct; and your gentleness will blend them so judiciously, that she will mind the friend as well as the mistress. She must remember that she is a Lactilla, not a Pastora; and is to tend real cows, not Arcadian sheep.

What! if I should go a step farther, dear madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as the Castle of Otranto? It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it:—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman's head, which it cannot develop and digest.

I will not reprove, without suggesting something in my turn. Give her Dryden's Cock and Fox, the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. I would recommend others of his tales: but her imagination is already too gloomy, and should be enlivened; for which reason I do not name Mr. Gray's Eton Ode and Church-yard. Prior's Solomon (for I doubt his Alma, though far superior, is too learned for her limited reading) would be very proper. In truth, I think the cast of the age (I mean in its compositions) is too *sombre*. The flimsy giantry of Ossian has introduced mountainous horrors. The exhibitions at Somerset-house are crowded with Brobdignag ghosts. Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the Blue-Stocking Club. If she has not your other pieces, might I take the liberty, madam, of begging you to buy them for her, and let me be in your debt?

pension. Duck afterwards entered the church, and was preferred to the living of Byfleet, in Surrey. Here he was much followed as a preacher, till at length falling into a state of despondency, he terminated his existence, by drowning, on the 30th March 1756. [Ed.]

And that your lessons may win their way more easily, even though her heart be good, will you add a guinea or two, as you think proper?—And, though I do not love to be named, yet, if it would encourage a subscription, I should have no scruple. It will be best to begin moderately; for, if she should take Hippoerene for Paetolus, we may hasten her ruin, not contribute to her fortune.

On recollection, you had better call me Mr. Any-body, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account; and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends would show my letters to him, you would find that I was as tender to him as to your milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not.

I have seen our excellent friend in Clarges-street:³ she complains as usual of her deafness; but I assure you it is at least not worse, nor is her weakness. Indeed I think both her and Mr. Vesey better than last winter. When will you *blue-stocking* yourself, and come amongst us? Consider how many of us are veterans; and though we do not trudge on foot according to the institution, we may be out at heels—and the heel, you know, madam, has never been privileged. I am, with the sincerest regard, madam,

Your much obliged and obedient humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Sunday night, Nov. 28, 1784.

I HAVE received the parcel of papers you sent me,¹ which I conclude come from lord Strafford, and will apply them as well as I possibly can, you may be sure—but with little hope of doing any good: humanity is no match for cruelty. There are now and then such angelic beings as Mr. Hanway² and Mr. How-

³ Mrs. Vesey. [Or.]

¹ Against cruelty to dogs. [Or.]

² Jonas Hanway, to whose charitable disposition and benevolent exertions the institution of the Marine Society owed its rise. He was an active supporter of the Magdalen; and his unceasing labours for the amelioration of the condition of the poorer classes, have secured to his memory the respect of all well-wishers to their fellow men. [Ed.]

ard;³ but our race in general is pestilently bad and malevolent. I have been these two years wishing to promote my excellent Mr. Porter's plan for alleviating the woes of chimney-sweepers, but never could make impression on three people; on the contrary, have generally caused a smile.

G * * * * C * * * * 's intelligence of hostilities commenced between the Dutch and Imperialists³ makes me suppose that France will support the former—or could they resist? Yet I had heard that France would not. Some have thought, as I have done, that a combination of partition would happen between Austria, France, and Prussia, the modern law of nations for avoiding wars. I know nothing: so my conjectures may all be erroneous; especially as one argues from reason; a very inadequate judge, as it leaves passions, caprices, and accidents, out of its calculation. It does not seem the interest of France, that the emperor's power should increase in their neighbourhood, and extend to the sea. Consequently it is France's interest to protect Holland in concert with Prussia. This last is a transient power, and may determine on the death of the present king; but the Imperial is a permanent force, and must be the enemy of France, however present connections may incline the scale.

In any case, I hope we shall no way be hooked into the quarrel; not only from the impotence of our circumstances, but as I think it would decide the loss of Ireland, which seems tranquilizing: but should we have any bickering with France, she would renew the manœuvres she practised so fatally in America. These are my politics; I do not know with whose they coincide or disagree, nor does it signify a straw. Nothing will depend on my opinion; nor have I any opinion about them, but when I have nothing at all to do that amuses me more, or nothing else to fill a letter.

² John Howard, the philanthropist; whose labours to improve the system of prison discipline have, at length, been crowned with success. This benevolent man fell a victim to his humanity; for, having visited a young lady at Cherson, sick of an epidemic fever, for the purpose of affording her medical assistance, he caught the distemper, and died 20th January 1790. There is a statue to his memory in St. Paul's Cathedral. [Ed.]

³ The emperor of Germany had formed the plan of opening the Scheldt, with the avowed object of benefitting his subjects in the Netherlands, but it eventually appeared that he was in treaty with the elector of Bavaria to resign those territories in exchange for the electorate. [Ed.]

I can give you a sample of my idleness, which may divert lady Ailesbury and your academy of arts and sciences for a minute in the evening. It came into my head yesterday to send a card to lady Lyttelton, to ask when she would be in town—here it is in an heroic epistle :

From a castle as vast—as the castles on signs ;
 From a hill that all Africa's—mole-hills outshines,
 This epistle is sent to a cottage so small,
 That the door cannot ope, if you stand in the hall,
 To a lady, who would be fifteen, if her knight
 And old swain were as young as Methusalem quite :
 It comes to inquire—not whether her eyes
 Are as radiant as ever—but how many sighs
 He must vent to the rocks and the echoes around,
 (Though nor echo nor rock in the parish is found)
 Before she, obdurate, his passion will meet—
 His passion to see her in Portugal-street.

As the sixth line goes rather too near the core, do not give a copy of it: however, I should be sorry if it displeased; though I do not believe it will, but be taken with good-humour as it was meant.

TO MR. PINKERTON.¹

March 17, 1785.

I AM much obliged to you, sir, for the many civil and kind expressions in your letter, and for the friendly information you give me. Partiality, I fear, dictated the former; but the last I can only ascribe to the goodness of your heart.

I have published nothing of any size but the pieces you mention, and one or two small tracts, now out of print and forgotten. The rest have been prefaces to some of my Strawberry editions, and to a few other publications, and some fugitive pieces, which I reprinted several years ago in a small volume, and which shall be at your service with the Catalogue of Noble Authors.

¹ The author of an Essay on Medals, and the History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stuart to that of Mary, &c. &c. [Or.] His Literary Correspondence was published a few years since. [Ed.]

With regard to the bookseller who has taken the trouble to collect my writings (amongst which I do not doubt but he will generously bestow on me many that I did not write, according to the laudable practice of such compilers), and who also intends to write my life, to which, as I never did any thing worth the notice of the public, he must likewise be a volunteer contributor, it would be vain for me to endeavour to prevent such a design. Whoever has been so unadvised as to throw himself on the public, must pay such a tax in a pamphlet or a magazine when he dies; but happily the insects that prey on carrion are still more short-lived than the carcasses were from which they draw temporary nutriment. Those momentary abortions live but a day, and are thrust aside by like embryos. Literary characters, when not illustrious, are known only to a few literary men, and, amidst the world of books, few readers can come to my share. Printing, that secures existence (in libraries) to indifferent authors of any bulk, is like those cases of Egyptian mummies which in catacombs preserve bodies of one knows not whom, and which are scribbled over with characters that nobody attempts to read, till nobody understands the language in which they were written.

I believe, therefore, it will be most wise to swim for a moment on the passing current, secure that it will soon hurry me into the ocean where all things are forgotten. To appoint a biographer is to bespeak a panegyric; and I doubt whether they who collect their works for the public, and, like me, are conscious of no intrinsic worth, do not beg mankind to accept of talents (whatever they were) in lieu of virtues. To anticipate spurious publications by a comprehensive and authentic one is almost as great an evil. It is giving a body to scattered atoms—and such an act in one's old age is declaring a fondness for the indiscretions of youth, or for trifles of an age, which though more mature, is only the less excusable. It is most true, sir, that so far from being prejudiced in favour of my own writings, I am persuaded that, had I thought early as I think now, I should never have appeared as an author. Age, frequent illness, and pain, have given me many hours of reflection in the intervals of the latter, which, besides showing me the inutility of all our little views, have suggested an observation that I love to encourage in myself, from the rationality of it. I have learnt and have practised the mortifying task of comparing myself with great authors, and that

comparison has annihilated all the flattery that self-love could suggest. I know how trifling my own writings are, and how far below the standard that constitutes excellence—for the shades that distinguish the degrees of mediocrity, they are not worth discrimination; and he must be humble, or easily satisfied, who can be content to glimmer for a moment a little more than his brethren glow-worms. Mine, therefore, you find, sir, is not humility, but pride. When young, I wished for fame; not examining whether I was capable of attaining it, nor considering in what light fame was desirable. There are two sorts of honest fame—that attendant on the truly great, and that better kind which is due to the good. I fear I did not aim at the latter, nor discovered that I could never compass the former. Having neglected the best road, and having, instead of the other, strolled into a narrow path that led to no goal worth seeking, I see the idleness of my journey, and hold it more graceful to abandon my wanderings to chance or oblivion, than to mark solicitude for trifles which I think so myself.

I beg your pardon for talking so much about myself; but an answer was due to the unmerited attention you have paid to my writings. I turn with more pleasure to speak on yours. Forgive me if I shall blame you, whether you either abandon your intention,² or are too impatient to finish it. Your preface proves that you are capable of treating your subject ably—but allow me to repeat, that it is a kind of subject that ought not to be executed impetuously. A mere recapitulation of authenticated facts would be dry. A more enlarged plan would demand acquaintance with the characters of the actors, and with the *probable* sources of measures. The age is accustomed to details and anecdotes; and the age immediately preceding his own is less known to any man than the history of any other period. You are young enough, sir, to collect information on many particulars that will occur in your progress, from living actors; at least, from their contemporaries; and great as your ardour may be, you will find yourself delayed by the want of materials, and by further necessary inquiries. As you have variety of talents, why should you not exercise them on works that will admit of more rapidity, and at the same time, at leisure moments, commence, digest, and enrich your plan by collecting new matter for it?

² Of writing a History of the reign of George II. [Or.]

In one word, I have too much zeal for your credit not to dissuade precipitation in a work of the kind you meditate. That I speak sincerely and without flattery, you are sure, as accident, not design, made me acquainted with your tract on medals. If I wish to delay your history, it must be that it may appear with more advantages; and I must speak disinterestedly, as my age will not allow me to hope to see it, if not finished soon. I should not forgive myself if I turned you from prosecution of your work—but as I am sure my writings can have given you no opinion of my having sound and deep judgment, pray follow your own, and allow no merit but that of sincerity and zeal to the sentiments of

Your obliged and
obedient humble servant.

TO MRS. H. MORE.¹

Berkeley-square, April 5, 1785.

HAD I not heard part of your conversation with Mrs. Carter² the other night, madam, I should certainly not have discovered the authoress of the very ingenious anticipation of our future jargon. How should I? I am not fortunate enough to know all your talents;—nay, I question whether you yourself suspect all you possess. Your *Bas-bleus* is in a style very different from any of your other productions that I have seen; and this letter, which shows your intuition into the degeneracy of our language, has a vein of humour and satire that could not be calculated from your *Bas-bleus*, in which good-nature and good-humour had made a great deal of learning wear all the ease of familiarity. I did wish you to write another Percy—but I beg

¹ This is an answer to an anonymous letter sent to Mr. Walpole by Mrs. H. More, ridiculing the prevailing adoption of French idioms into the language. [Or.]

² Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, a well-known literary lady, who established her reputation as a woman of great learning by her translation of Epictetus; and was the writer of numbers 44 and 100 in the “Rambler,” and of a volume of clever poems, published in 1762. She was the daughter of the Rev. Nicholas Carter, was born at Deal Dec. 17, 1717, and died in London 19th Feb. 1806. [Ed.]

now that you will first produce a specimen of *all* the various manners in which you can shine; for, since you are as modest as³ if your issue were illegitimate, I don't know but, like some females really in fault, you would stifle some of your pretty infants, rather than be detected and blush.

In the mean time, I beseech you not only to print *your specimen of the language that is to be in fashion*, but have it entered at Stationers'-hall; or depend upon it, if ever a copy falls into the hands of a fine gentleman yet unborn, who shall be able both to read and write, he will adopt your letter for his own, and the Galimatias will give the *ton* to the Court, as Euphues³ did near two hundred years ago;⁴ and then you will have corrupted our language instead of defending it:—and surely it is not *your* interest, madam, to have pure English grow obsolete.

If you do not promise to grant my request, I will show your letter every where to those that are worthy of seeing it;—that is, indeed, in very few places;—for you *shall* have the honour of it. It is one of those compositions that prove themselves standards, by begetting imitations; and if the genuine parent is unknown, it will be ascribed to every body that is supposed (in his own set) to have more wit than the rest of the world. I should be diverted, I own, to hear it faintly disavowed by some who would wish to pass for its authors:—but still there is more pleasure in doing justice to merit, than in drawing vain pretensions into a scrape; and, therefore, I think you and I had better be honest and acknowledge it, though to you (for I am out of the question, but as evidence) it will be painful; for though the proverb says, “Tell truth, and shame the devil,” I believe he is never half so much confounded as a certain amiable young gentlewoman who is discovered to have more taste and abilities than she ever ventured to ascribe to herself even in the most private dialogues with her own heart, especially when that native friend is so pure as to have no occasion to make allowances even for self-love. For my part, I am most seriously obliged to you, madam, for so agreeable and kind a communication, and am, with sincere regard,

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant.

³ “Euphues and his England” was written by John Lilly, and published in quarto in 1580. [Or.]

⁴ Which fact has been illustrated with his unrivalled tact and good management by sir Walter Scott, in the “Monastery.” [Ed.]

TO MR. PINKERTON.

June 25, 1785.

I AM much obliged to your book,¹ sir, on many accounts, particularly for having recalled my mind to subjects of delight to which it was grown dulled by age and indolence. In consequence of your reclaiming it, I asked myself why you feel so much disregard to certain authors whose fame is established.—You have assigned good reasons for withholding your approbation from some, from their being imitators.—It was natural then to ask myself again, whence they had obtained so much celebrity?—I think I have discovered a cause which I do not remember to have seen noted; and that cause I think was, that such authors possessed grace. Do not suspect me for a disciple of lord Chesterfield—nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient in writing. But I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve from putrefaction, and is distinct even from style. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors not in your favour obtained part of their renown—Virgil in particular.—Though I am far from disagreeing with you on him in general—I think there is such a want of invention (and when he did invent it was so foolishly), so little good sense, so little variety, and so little power over the passions, that I have often said, from contempt for his matter, and from the charm of his harmony, I believe I should like him better if I was to hear the *Æneid* repeated and did not understand Latin.—But he has more than harmony; whatever he utters is said gracefully.—A Roman farmer might not understand the *Georgic*, but a Roman courtier was made to understand farming—the farming of that age—and Virgil could captivate a lord of Augustus's bed-chamber, and tempt him to listen to themes of rusticity. This I think is more than the power of style; it was ennobling the subject: I confess I admire Mr. Addison's phrase, that Virgil * * * * * about with an air of majesty. A style may be excellent without grace—for instance, Swift's. Eloquence may bestow a lasting style and one of more dignity; but eloquence may want that ease, that genteel air, that flows from, or constitutes grace. Addison was

¹ Letters on Literature, under the name of Heron. [Or.]

master of that grace in his pieces of humour, and, perhaps from that secret, exceeds all men that ever lived but Shakspeare, in humour, by never dropping into an approach to burlesque and buffoonery, even when his humour descended to characters that in any other hands would have been vulgarly low. Fielding had as much humour perhaps as Addison, but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting.

The Greeks had grace in every thing—in oratory, in poetry, in statuary, in architecture, and, I dare say, in painting and music.

The Romans, it is true, were their imitators, but, having grace too, imparted it to their copies, which gave them a merit that almost raises them to a level with the originals.

Horace's odes acquired their fame, no doubt, from the graces, of his style—a capital merit of both Tibullus and Propertius, who certainly cannot boast of more meaning than there is in Horace's odes.

Waller, whom you proscribe, sir, owed his fame to the graces of his manner, though he frequently stumbled and even fell flat—but a few of his smaller pieces are as graceful as possible.

Milton has merit so much superior, that I will only say, that if his Raphael, his Satan, and his Adam have as much dignity as the Apollo Belvidere, his Eve has all the delicacy of the Venus of Medici, and his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano. His tenderness always imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas, and the Allegro, Penseroso, and Comus might be denominated from the three Graces.

Milton's soul was full of poetry, sense, and fire, and he had improved all those qualities by studying the best models.

Thus prepared, he gave a loose to his genius, which was too impetuous and sublime to be curbed by the mechanism of rhyme, which would often have impeded his expressing all he felt, and oftener perhaps have obliged him to add frigidities to help out the return of the sound. The language, therefore, of Milton's blank verse was not studied, but the natural application of his own tongue to deliver his own ideas. The imitators of Milton, on the contrary, study his phrase to express common ideas, their own ideas, void of his vigour. Thence the diction of Thomson, Akenside, &c. &c. is less easy than it would have been if they had written in rhyme. Their language is not poetic, but bom-

bast prose, or rather prose dressed in poetic rags. The *Paradise Lost* is like M. Angelo's *Moses*—The Seasons, and the Pleasures of the Imagination, like the king of hearts and diamonds, with robes made of patches of gaudy colours, that do not unite, and differ from the knaves but by the length of their trains.

Cowley, I think, would have had grace, for his mind was graceful, if he had had any ear, or if his taste had not been vitiated by the pursuit of wit; for false wit always deviates into tinsel or pertness. Pertness is mistaken affectation of grace, as pedantry is erroneous dignity—the familiarity of the one, and the clumsiness of the other, prevent or destroy grace.

Nature, that produces samples of all qualities, and in the scale of gradation exhibits all possible shades, affords us types that are more apposite than words. The eagle is sublime, the lion majestic, the swan graceful, the monkey pert, the bear ridiculously awkward. I mention these as more expressive than I could make definitions of my meaning: but I will only apply the swan, under whose wings I will shelter an apology for Racine, whose pieces give me the idea of that bird. The colouring of the swan is pure, his attitudes are graceful; he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet are ugly, his walk not natural—he can soar, but it is with difficulty. Still the impression a swan leaves is that of grace. So does Racine.

Boileau may be compared to a dog, whose sagacity is remarkable, as well as its fawning on its master, and its snarling at those he dislikes. If Boileau was too stern to admit the pliancy of grace, he compensates by good sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate, whom you respect, but whose public justice and severity leave an awe that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile—but if a good translator deserves praise, Boileau deserves more—he certainly does not fall below his originals, and, considering when he wrote, has a greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste, and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his *Lutrin*, replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour, and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients. Except Horace, how little idea had either Greeks or Romans of wit and humour! Aristophanes and Lucian, compared with moderns, were, the one a blackguard, the other a buffoon. To my eyes, the *Lutrin*,

and the Rape of the Lock, are standards of elegance and grace not to be paralleled by antiquity, and are eternal and mortifying reproaches to Voltaire, whose indelicacy in the *Pucelle* degraded him as much, when compared with the three authors I have named, as his *Henriade* leaves Virgil, and even Lucan, whom he more resembles, by far his superiors. The *Dunciad* is dishonoured by the offensive images of the games, but the poetry appears to me admirable; and though the fourth book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others. It has descriptions not surpassed by any poet that ever existed, and which, surely, a writer merely ingenious will never equal. The lines on Italy, on Venice, on Convents, have all that grace for which I contend, as an ingredient distinct from the general beauties allotted to poetry—and the Rape of the Lock (besides the originality of the invention) is a standard of graceful writing.

In general, I believe that what I call grace is denominated elegance—but I think grace is something higher. I will explain myself by instances rather than by words. Apollo is graceful, Mercury elegant.

Petrarch, perhaps, owed his whole merit to the harmony of his numbers, and the graces of his style. They conceal his want of meaning, and want of variety: and his complaints may have added an interest, which, had his passion been successful, and had expressed itself with equal sameness, would have made the number of his sonnets insupportable. Melancholy in a poet, I am inclined to think, contributes to grace, when it is not disgraced by pitiful lamentations, like Ovid's and Cicero's in their banishment. We respect melancholy. A gay writer, who should only express satisfaction without variety, would soon be nauseous.

Madame de Sevigné is an instance of both—There is too much of grief for her daughter's absence—yet it is always expressed by new turns and new images. When she forgets her concern, and returns to her natural disposition, gaiety, every paragraph has novelty:—her allusions, her applications, are the happiest possible. She has the art of making you acquainted with all her acquaintance; and even with the spots she inhabited. Her language is correct, though unstudied; and when her mind is full of any great event, she interests you with the warmth of a dramatic writer, not with the chilling impartiality of an historian.—Pray read her account of the death of

marshal Turenne, and of the arrival of king James in France, and tell me whether you do not know their persons as if you had lived at the time. For my part, if you will allow me a word of digression, I hate the cold impartiality recommended to historians.—*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum tibi ipsi.*—But that I may not wander again, nor tire you, nor contradict you any more, I will finish, only interceding for grace, as an apology for several writers, to whom I think you a little too severe.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, October 6, 1785.

I WONDERED I did not hear from you, as I concluded you had returned. You have made me good amends by the entertaining story of your travels. If I were not too disjointed for long journeys, I should like to see much of what you have seen; but, if I had the agility of Vestris, I would not purchase all that pleasure for my eyes at the expense of my unsociability, which could not have borne the hospitality you experienced. It was always death to me, when I did travel England, to have lords and ladies receive me and show me their castles, instead of turning me over to their housekeeper: it hindered my seeing any thing, and I was the whole time meditating my escape: but lady A. and you are not such sensitive plants, nor shrink and close up if a stranger holds out a hand.

I don't wonder you was disappointed with Jarvis's windows at New College: I had foretold their miscarriage: the old and the new are as mismatched as an orange and a lemon, and destroy each other; nor is there room to retire back and see half of the new; and sir Joshua's washy Virtues make the Nativity a dark spot from the darkness of the Shepherds, which happened, as I knew it would, from most of Jarvis's colours not being transparent.

I have not seen the improvements at Blenheim. I used to think it one of the ugliest places in England; a giant's castle, who had laid waste all the country round him. Every body now allows the merit of Brown's¹ achievements there.

¹ Lancelot Brown, the celebrated landscape gardener, better known as "Capability Brown," a name given to him from his habit of saying, when he

Of all your survey I wish most to see Beau-Desert. Warwick-castle and Stowe I know by heart:—the first I had rather possess than any seat upon earth—not that I think it the most beautiful of all, though charming, but because I am so intimate with all its proprietors for the last thousand years.

I have often and often studied the new plan of Stowe: it is pompous; but though the wings are altered,* they are not lengthened. Though three parts of the edifices in the garden are bad, they enrich that insipid country, and the vastness pleases me more than I can defend.

I rejoice that your jaunt has been serviceable to lady A. The *charming-man*² is actually with me; but neither he nor I can keep our promise incontinently. He expects two sons of his brother sir William, whom he is to pack up and send to the Pères de l'Oratoire at Paris. I expect lord and lady W. to-morrow, who are to pass a few days with me: but both the *charming-man* and I will be with you soon. I have no objection to a wintry visit: as I can neither ride nor walk, it is more comfortable when most of my time is passed within doors. If I continue perfectly well, as I am, I shall not settle in town till after Christmas: there will not be a half a dozen persons there for whom I care a straw.

I know nothing at all. The peace between the Austrian harpy and the frogs is made. They were stout, and preferred being gobbled to parting with their money. At last, France offered to pay the money for them. The harpy blushed—for the first time

examined any locality where his powers of improvement might advantageously be carried into effect—"It has great capability." Not only Blenheim, but Stowe, Trentham, Richmond, and other places, attest the powers of his genius.

One of Brown's followers, it may be presumed a very humble one, went down some years since to Ashridge, the seat of the earl of Bridgewater, to carry into effect some improvements in the park. On the morning after his arrival, calling the earl to the window of the drawing-room, and pointing to the magnificent avenue of oaks, he said, "My lord, we must begin by cutting down those trees." "At your peril, sir," replied the astonished earl; "I would not take a thousand pounds a-picce for them:" and ringing the bell, he ordered the carriage of the unfortunate pretender to a knowledge of ornamental planting. [Ed.]

² Edward Jerningham, esq. [Or.] He was uncle to the present lord Stafford, a man of letters, and well known in the literary world. His "Poems and Plays" were published in four volumes in 1806. [Ed.]

—and would not take it, but signed the peace, and will plunder somebody else.

Have you got Boswell's most absurd enormous book?³—The best thing in it is a *bon-mot* of lord Pembroke. The more one learns of Johnson, the more preposterous assemblage he appears of strong sense, of the lowest bigotry and prejudices, of pride, brutality, fretfulness and vanity,—and Boswell is the ape of most of his faults, without a grain of his sense. It is the story of a mountebank and his zany.

I forgot to say, that I wonder how, with your turn and knowledge and enterprize in scientific exploits, you came not to visit the duke of Bridgewater's operations—or did you omit them, because I should not have understood a word you told me? Adieu!

TO THE HON. GEORGE HARDINGE.¹

DEAR SIR,

I have had a calf born, but it was ugly and from a *mésalliance*. But I have had two more cows whose times are out, and you shall know as soon as they are delivered. When I received your note, I concluded it was to tell me of lady D * * * 's message. She told me she would ask you to-morrow evening; and she desired I would meet you. I shall not tell *you* what she said of you.

³ This is not Boswell's Life of Johnson, which, from the manner in which Walpole speaks, the reader might well suppose it to be, but Boswell's "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D. London 1785, 8vo." and of which a second edition, revised and corrected, was published in the same year. The first edition of Boswell's Biography of the great lexicographer, which, notwithstanding Walpole's criticism, the world persists in thinking one of the most delightful books in the language, did not appear until 1790. [Ed.]

¹ This letter, not having a date to it, has hitherto been inserted immediately after that addressed to Hardinge, on the 18th April 1782. That the present is the situation in which it ought to appear is evident from the subjects mentioned in it. In the first place, in the year 1785, balloons were as much the rage as in the present day; Lunardi, Blanchard, and others, making ascents. In the second place, the "New Strawberry Edition," is obviously the Essay on Modern Gardening, with a translation by the duc de Nivernois, which was printed at Strawberry Hill in that year. [Ed.]

I have just seen the balloon too, and all the idea it gave me was one I have not had since I was at school—*football*.

My gout, thank you, is dormant; the rest, such rest as there is, gives me no trouble.

I send you a new Strawberry edition, which you will find extraordinary, not only as a most accurate translation, but as a piece of genuine French not metaphysicked by La Harpe, by Thomas, &c. and with versions even of Milton into *poetry*, though in the *French* language. The duc has had 100 copies, and I myself as many for presents: none will be sold, so their imaginary value will rise.

I have seen over and over again Mr. Barrett's plans, and approve them exceedingly. The Gothic parts are classic; you must consider the whole as Gothic modernized in parts—not as what it is—the reverse. Mr. Wyatt, if more employed in that style, will show as much taste and imagination as he does in Grecian. I shall visit *Lee* next summer.

I remain yours ever.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 9, 1786.

IT is very cruel, my dear madam, when you send me such charming lines,¹ and say such kind and flattering things to me and of me, that I cannot even thank you with my own poor hand; and yet my hand is as much obliged to you as my eye and ear and understanding. My hand was in great pain, when your present arrived. I opened it directly, and set to reading, till your music and my own vanity composed a quieting draught that glided to the ends of my fingers, and lulled the throbs into the deliquium that attends opium when it does not put one absolutely to sleep. I don't believe that the deity who formerly practised both poetry and physic, when gods got their livelihood by more than one profession, ever gave a recipe in rhyme; and therefore, since Dr. Johnson has prohibited application to Pagan divinities, and Mr. Burke has not struck medicine and poetry out of the list of sinecures, I wish you may get a patent for life for exercising both

¹ The poem of Florio, dedicated to Mr. Walpole. [Or.]

faculties. It would be a comfortable event for me; for, since I cannot wait on you to thank you, nor dare ask you

—— to call your doves yourself,

and visit me in your Parnassian quality, I might send for you as my *physicianess*. Yet why should I not ask you to come and see me? You are not such a prude as to

—— blush to shew compassion,

though it should

—— not chance this year to be the fashion.²

And I can tell you, that powerful as your poetry is, and old as I am, I believe a visit from you would do me as much good almost as your verses. In the mean time, I beg of you to accept of an addition to your Strawberry editions; and believe me to be, with the greatest gratitude, your too much honoured

And most obliged humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Sunday night, June 18, 1786.

I SUPPOSE you have been swearing at the east wind for parching your verdure, and are now weeping for the rain that drowns your hay. I have these calamities in common, and my constant and particular one, people that come to see my house, which unfortunately is more in request than ever. Already I have had twenty-eight sets, have five more tickets given out, and yesterday before I had dined three German barons came. My house is a torment, not a comfort!

I was sent for again to dine at Gunnersbury¹ on Friday, and was forced to send to town for a dress-coat and a sword. There were the prince of Wales, the prince of Mecklenburg,² the duke of Portland, lord Clanbrassil, lord and lady Clermont, lord and lady Southampton, lord Pelham, and Mrs. Howe. The prince of

² *Vide Florio.* [Or.]

¹ The princess Amelia's. [Ed.]

² Brother of queen Charlotte. [Ed.]

Mecklenburg went back to Windsor after coffee; and the prince and lord and lady Clermont to town after tea to hear some new French players at lady William Gordon's.³ The princess, lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three pools at commerce till ten. I am afraid I was tired and gaped. While we were at the dairy, the princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated. She would not excuse me. I promised she should have an ode on her next birthday; which diverted the prince—but all would not do—So, as I came home, I made the following stanzas, and sent them to her breakfast next morning:

I.

In deathless odes for ever green
Augustus' laurels blow;
Nor e'er was grateful duty seen
In warmer strains to flow.

II.

Oh! why is Flaccus not alive,
Your favourite scene to sing?
To Gunnersbury's charms could give
His lyre immortal spring.

III.

As warm as his my zeal for you,
Great princess, could I show it:
But though you have a Horace too—
Ah, madam! he's no poet.

If they are but poor verses, consider I am sixty-nine, was half asleep, and made them almost extempore—and by command! However, they succeeded, and I received this gracious answer:

"I wish I had a name that could answer your pretty verses. Your yawning yesterday opened your vein for pleasing me; and I return you my thanks, my good Mr. Walpole, and remain sincerely your friend,

"AMELIA."

³ Lord William Gordon, the late ranger of the Green Park, was second son of Cosmo George, third duke of Gordon. He married, 1st March 1781, the hon. Frances Ingram Shepherd, daughter of Charles, ninth viscount Irvine, by whom at his death, 1st May 1823, he left an only daughter, Frances Isabella Kerr, born 6th March 1782, who died unmarried 8th Sept. 1831. [Ed.]

I think this is very genteel at seventy-five.

Do you know, that I have bought the Jupiter Serapis as well as the Julio Clovio ! ⁴ Mr. * * * * assures me he has seen six of the hand, and not one of them so fine or so well preserved. I am glad sir Joshua Reynolds saw no more excellence in the Jupiter than in the Clovio ; or the duke of Portland, I suppose, would have purchased it, as he has the vase for a thousand pounds.⁵ I would not change. I told sir W. Hamilton and the late duchess, when I never thought it would be mine, that I would rather have the head than the vase. I shall long for Mrs. Damer to make a bust to it, and then it will be still more valuable. I have deposited both the Illumination and the Jupiter in lady Di's cabinet, which is worthy of them——And here my collection winds up—I will not purchase trumpery after such jewels. Besides, every thing is much dearer in old age, as one has less time to enjoy. Good-night !

To RICHARD GOUGH, Esq.¹

Berkeley-square, June 21, 1786.

ON coming to town yesterday upon business, I found, sir, your very magnificent and most valuable present, for which I beg you will accept my most grateful thanks. I am impatient to return to Twickenham, to read it tranquilly. As yet I have only had time to turn the prints over, and to read the preface ; but I see already, that it is both a noble and laborious work, and will do great honour both to you and to your country. Yet one apprehension it has given me—I fear not living to see the second part ! Yet I shall presume to keep it unbound, not only till it is perfectly dry and secure, but, as I mean the binding should be as fine as it deserves, I should be afraid of not having both volumes exactly alike.—Your partiality, I doubt, sir, has induced you to insert a paper not so worthy of the public regard as the rest of your splendid performance. My letter to Mr. Cole, which I am sure I had utterly forgotten to have ever

⁴ At the sale of the duchess dowager of Portland. [Or.]

⁵ The celebrated Portland, or Barberini, vase, now in the British Museum. [Ed.]

¹ The editor of Camden's Britannia. [Or.]

written, was a hasty indigested sketch, like the rest of my scribblings, and never calculated to lead such well-meditated and accurate works as yours. Having lived familiarly with Mr. Cole from our boyhood, I used to write to him carelessly on the occasions that occurred. As it was always on subjects of no importance, I never thought of enjoining secrecy. I could not foresee that such idle communications would find a place in a great national work, or I should have been more attentive to what I said. Your taste, sir, I fear, has for once been misled, and I shall be sorry for having innocently blemished a single page.—Since your partiality (for such it certainly was) has gone so far, I flatter myself you will have retained enough to accept—not a retribution—but a trifling mark of my regard, in the little volume that accompanies this ; in which you will find that another too favourable reader has bestowed on me more distinction than I could procure for myself, by turning my slight essay on gardening to the pure French of the last age ; and, which is wonderful, has not debased Milton by French poetry—on the contrary, I think Milton has given a dignity to French poetry—nay, and harmony ; both which, I thought that language almost incapable of receiving. As I would wish to give all the value I can to my offering, I will mention that I have printed but 400 copies, half of which went to France ; and as this is an age in which mere rarities are preferred to commoner things of intrinsic worth, as I found by the ridiculous prices given for some of my insignificant publications, merely because they are scarce, I hope, under the title of a kind curiosity, my thin piece will be admitted into your library.—If you would indulge me so far, sir, when I might hope to see the second part, I would calculate how many more fits of the gout I may weather, and would be still more strict in my regimen. I hope, at least, that you will not wait for the engravers, but will accomplish the text for the sake of the world—in this I speak disinterestedly. Though you are much younger than I am, I would have your part of the work secure ; engravers may always proceed, or be found—another author cannot. I have the honour to be, with great gratitude, sir,

Your much obliged and obedient humble servant.

P.S. I add a little piece, which is also rare here ; sir Horace Mann sent me four, and I beg your acceptance of one.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, August 29, 1786.

SINCE I received the honour of your lordship's last, I have been at Park-place for a few days. Lord and lady Frederick Campbell and Mrs. Damer were there. We went on the Thames to see the new bridge at Henley, and Mrs. Damer's colossal masks. There is not a sight in the island more worthy of being visited. The bridge is as perfect as if bridges were natural productions, and as beautiful as if it had been built for Wentworth-castle; and the masks, as if the Romans had left them here. We saw them in a fortunate moment; for the rest of the time was very cold and uncomfortable, and the evenings as chill as many we have had lately. In short, I am come to think that the beginning of an old ditty, which passes for a collection of blunders, was really an old English pastoral, it is so descriptive of our climate:

Three children sliding on the ice
All on a summer's day——

I have been overwhelmed more than ever by visitants to my house. Yesterday I had count Oginski,¹ who was a pretender to the crown of Poland at the last election, and has been stripped of most of a vast estate. He had on a ring of the new king of Prussia—or I should have wished him joy on the death of one of the plunderers of his country.²

It has long been my opinion that the out-pensioners of Bedlam are so numerous, that the shortest and cheapest way would be to confine in Moorfields the few that remain in their senses, who would then be safe; and let the rest go at large. They are the out-pensioners who are for destroying poor dogs. The whole canine race never did half so much mischief as lord George Gordon; nor even worry hares, but when hallooed on by men. As it is a persecution of animals, I do not love hunting; and

¹ Count Oginski, father of count Michel Oginski, the associate of Kosciusko, and author of the "*Mémoires sur la Pologne et les Polonais, depuis 1788 jusqu'à la fin de 1815*;" Paris 1827, 4 vols. 8vo.: which is reviewed in the third volume of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*. [Ed.]

² Frederick the Great of Prussia died 17th Aug. 1786. [Ed.]

what old writers mention as a commendation makes me hate it the more, its being an image of war. Mercy on us ! that destruction of any species should be a sport or a merit ! What cruel unreflecting imps we are ! Every body is unwilling to die, yet sacrifices the lives of others to momentary pastime, or to the still emptier vapour, fame ! A hero or a sportsman who wishes for longer life, is desirous of prolonging devastation. We shall be crammed, I suppose, with panegyrics and epitaphs on the king of Prussia.—I am content that he can now have an epitaph. But, alas ! the emperor will write one for him probably in blood ! and, while he shuts up convents for the sake of population, will be stuffing hospitals with maimed soldiers, besides making thousands of widows !—I have just been reading a new published history of the colleges³ in Oxford by Anthony Wood, and there found a feature in a character that always offended me, that of archbishop Chicheley, who prompted Henry V. to the invasion of France, to divert him from squeezing the overgrown clergy. When that priest meditated founding All Souls, and “consulted his friends (who seem to have been honest men) what great matter of piety he had best perform to God in his old age, he was advised by them to build an hospital for the wounded and sick soldiers, that daily returned from the wars then had in France ;”—I doubt his grace’s friends thought as I do of his artifice ; “but,” continues the historian, “*disliking those motions*, and valuing the welfare of the deceased more than the wounded and diseased, he resolved with himself to promote his design—which was, to have masses said for the king, queen, and himself, &c. while living, and for their souls when dead.” And that mummery the old foolish rogue thought more efficacious than ointments and medicines for the wretches he had made ! And of the chaplains and clerks he instituted in that dormitory, one was to teach grammar, and another, prick-song. How history makes one shudder and laugh by turns !—But I fear I have wearied your lordship with my idle declamation, and you will repent having commanded me to send you more letters ; and I can only plead that I am

Your (perhaps too) obedient humble servant.

³ “The History and Antiquities of the Colleges and Halls in the University of Oxford,” by Anthony Wood, M.A. ; published in English, with a continuation, by John Gutch, M.A. Oxford, 4to. 1786. An appendix was published in 1790. [Ed.]

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, October 29, 1786.

I WAS sorry not to be apprised of your intention of going to town, where I would have met you; but I knew it too late, both as I was engaged, and as you was to return so soon. I mean to come to Park-place in a week or fortnight; but I should like to know what company you expect, or do not expect; for I had rather fill up your vacancies than be a supernumerary.

Lady Onslow has sent me two charades made by colonel Fitzpatrick;¹ the first she says is very easy, the second very difficult. I have not come within sight of the easy one; and though I have a guess at the other, I do not believe I am right; and so I send them to you, who are master-general of the *Œdipuses*.

The first, that is so easy:

In concert, song, or serenade,
My first requires my second's aid.
To those residing near the pole
I would not recommend my whole.

The two last lines, I conclude, neither connect with the two first, nor will help one to deciphering them.

The difficult one:

Charades of all things are the worst,
But yet my best have been my first.
Who with my second are concern'd
Will to despise my whole have learn'd.

This sounds like a good one, and therefore I will not tell you my solution; for, if it is wrong, it might lead you astray; and if it is right, it would prove the charade is not a good one.

Had I any thing better, I would not send you charades, unless for the name of the author.

¹ The hon. Richard Fitzpatrick, second son of John first earl of Upper Ossory, by lady Evelyn, daughter of the first earl Gower. He was secretary at war under the duke of Portland's administration, and again under that of lord Grenville. He lived in habits of intimacy with all the distinguished literary characters of his day, wrote admirable *vers de société*, and was one of the authors of the "Probationary Odes." He died in 1813. [Ed.]

I have had a letter from your brother, who tells me that he has his grandson S * * * with him, who is a prodigy. I say to myself,

——Prodigies are grown so frequent,
That they have lost their name——

I have seen prodigies in plenty of late—aye, and formerly too—but, divine as they have all been, each has had a mortal heel, and has trodden back a vast deal of their celestial path! I beg to be excused from any more credulity.

I am sorry you have lost your *fac-totum* * * *. I suppose he had discovered that he was too necessary to you. Every day cures one of reliance on others; and we acquire a prodigious stock of experience by the time that we shall cease to have occasion for any. Well! I am not clear but making or solving charades is as wise as any thing we can do. I should pardon professed philosophers, if they would allow that their wisdom is only trifling, instead of calling their trifling, wisdom. Adieu!

TO THE RIGHT HON. ELIZABETH LADY CRAVEN.¹

Berkeley-square, Nov. 27, 1786.

To my extreme surprise, madam, when I knew not in what quarter of the known or unknown world you was resident or existent, my maid in Berkeley-square sent me to Strawberry-hill a note from your ladyship, offering to call on me for a moment—for a whirlwind, I suppose, was waiting at your door to carry you to Japan; and, as balloons have not yet settled any post-offices in the air, you could not, at least did not, give me any direction where to address you—though you did kindly reproach me with my silence. I must enter into a little justification before I proceed. I heard from you from Venice, then from Poland, and then, having whisked through Tartary, from Petersburg—but still with no directions. I said to myself, “I will write to Grand Cairo, which probably will be her next stage.” Nor was I totally in the wrong—for there came a letter from Constantinople, with a design mentioned of going to the Greek islands, and orders to

¹ Afterwards margravine of Anspach. [Or.]

write to you at Vienna, but with no banker or other address specified.

For a great while, I had even stronger reasons than these for silence. For several months I was disabled by the gout from holding a pen ; and you must know, madam, that one can't write when one cannot write. Then, how write to *la Fiancée du Roi de Garbe* ? You had been in the tent of the cham of Tartary, and in the harem of the captain pacha, and, during your navigation of the Ægean, were possibly fallen into the terrible power of a corsair. How could I suppose that so many despotic infidels would part with your charms ? I never expected you again on Christian ground. I did not doubt your having a talisman to make people in love with you ; but anti-talismans are quite a new specific.

Well, while I was in this quandary, I received a delightful drawing of the castle of Otranto—but still provokingly without any address. However, my gratitude for so very agreeable and obliging a present could not rest till I found you out. I wrote to the duchess of Richmond, to beg she would ask your brother captain Berkeley for a direction to you ; and he has this very day been so good as to send me one, and I do not lose a moment in making use of it.

I give your ladyship a million of thanks for the drawing, which was really a very valuable gift to me. I did not even know that there was a castle of Otranto. When the story was finished, I looked into the map of the kingdom of Naples for a well-sounding name, and that of Otranto was very sonorous. Nay, but the drawing is so satisfactory, that there are two small windows, one over another, and looking into the country, that suit exactly to the small chambers from one of which Matilda heard the young peasant singing beneath her. Judge how welcome this must be to the author ; and thence judge, madam, how much you must have obliged him !

When you take another flight towards the bounds of the western ocean, remember to leave a direction. One cannot always shoot flying. Lord Chesterfield directed a letter to the late lord Pembroke, who was always swimming, “ To the earl of Pembroke in the Thames, over against Whitehall.” That was sure of finding him within a certain number of fathoms ; but your ladyship's longitude varies so rapidly, that one must be a good

bowler indeed, to take one's ground so judiciously that by casting wide of the mark one may come in near to the jack.

I have the honour to be, &c.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 1, 1787.

Do not imagine, dear madam, that I pretend in the most distant manner to pay you for charming poetry with insipid prose; much less that I acquit a debt of gratitude for flattering kindness and friendship, by a meagre tale that does not even aim at celebrating you. No: I have but two motives for offering you the accompanying trifle: ¹ the first, to prove that the moment I have finished any thing, *you* are of the earliest in my thoughts: the second, that coming from my press, I wish it may be added to your Strawberry editions. It is so far from being designed for the public, that I have printed but forty copies; which I do not mention to raise its value, though it will with mere collectors, but lest you should lend it and lose it, when I may not be able to supply its place.

Christina, indeed, has some title to connection with you, both from her learning and her moral writings; as you are justly entitled to a lodging in her *Cité des Dames*, where I am sure her three patronesses would place you, as a favourite *élève* of some of their still more amiable sisters, who must at this moment be condoling with their unfortunate sister Gratitude, whose vagabond foundling has so basely disgraced her and herself. You fancied that Mrs. Y * * * * was a spurious issue of a muse; and to be sure, with all their immortal virginity, the parish of Parnassus has been sadly charged with their bantlings: and as nobody knows the fathers, no wonder some of the misses have turned out woful reprobates!

I was very unlucky in not calling at Mrs. Vesey's the evening you was there for a moment; but I hope for better fortune soon, and will be much obliged to you if you will tell me when I may hope for that pleasure.

Your most grateful and faithful humble servant.

¹ Christine de Pise. [Or.]

TO LADY CRAVEN.

Berkeley-square, Jan, 2, 1787.

YOUR ladyship tells me that you have kept a journal of your travels—you know not when your friends at Paris will give you time to put it *au net*—that is, I conclude and hope, prepare it for the press. I do not wonder that those friends, whether talismanic or others, are so assiduous, if you indulge them; but unless they are of the former description, they are unpardonable, if they know what they interrupt—and deserve much more that you should wish they had fallen into a ditch, than the poor gentlemen who sigh more to see you in sheets of holland, than of paper. To me the mischief is enormous. How proud I should be to register a noble authoress of my own country, who has travelled over more regions and farther than any female in print! Your ladyship has visited those islands and shores, whence formerly issued those travelling sages and legislators who sought and imported wisdom, laws, and religion into Greece; and though we are so perfect as to want none of those commodities, the fame of those philosophers is certainly diminished when a fair lady has gone as far in quest of knowledge. You have gone in an age when travels are brought to a juster standard, by narrations being limited to truth.

Formerly the performers of the longest voyages destroyed half the merit of their expeditions, by relating not what they had, but had *not* seen; a sort of communication that they might have imparted without stirring a foot from home. Such exaggerations drew discredit on travels, till people would not believe that there existed in other countries any thing very different from what they saw in their own: and because no Patagonians, or gentry seven or eight feet high, were really discovered, they would not believe that there were Laplanders or pigmies of three and four. Incredulity went so far, that at last it was doubted whether China so much as existed; and our countryman sir John Mandeville¹ got an ill name, because, though he gave an account

¹ Sir John Mandeville, the celebrated traveller, was born at St. Albans about the year 1300, and died in 1372. Manuscripts of his travels are

of it, he had not brought back its right name—at least, if I do not mistake, this was the case.—But it is long since I read any thing about the matter; and I am willing to begin my travels again under your ladyship's auspices.² I am sorry to hear, madam, that by your account lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate and faithful as modern travellers. The invaluable art of inoculation, which she brought from Constantinople, so dear to all admirers of beauty, and to which we owe perhaps the preservation of yours, stamps her an universal benefactress; and, as you rival her in poetic talents, I would rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrum, than detect her for romancing. However, genuine accounts of the interior of seraglios would be precious; and I was in hopes would become the greater rarities, as I flattered myself that your friends the empress of Russia and the emperor were determined to level Ottoman tyranny. His imperial majesty, who has demolished the prison bars of so many nunneries, would perform a still more Christian act in setting free so many useless sultanas; and her czarish majesty, I trust, would be as great a benefactress to our sex, by abolishing the barbarous practice that reduces us to be of none. Your ladyship's indefatigable peregrinations should have such great objects in view, when you have the ear of sovereigns.

Peter the hermit conjured up the first crusadees against the infidels by running about from monarch to monarch. Lady Craven should be as zealous and as renowned; and every fair Circassian would acknowledge that one English lady had repaid their country for the secret which another had given to Europe from their practice. I have the honour to be, madam,

Your ladyship's most obedient humble servant.

extant in English, French, and Latin, and it is undecided in which language they were originally written. The best edition of them is that in 8vo., published in 1725. [Ed.]

² Lady Craven's travels appeared in 1789, under the title "Journey through the Chirinea to Constantinople; in a series of Letters from the right hon. Elizabeth lady Craven to the margrave of Brandenburgh Anspach and Bareuth." A second edition, including a variety of letters not before published, appeared in 1814. [Ed.]

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 23, 1787.

I NOT only send you *la Cité des Dames*, but Christina's Life of Charles V., which will entertain you more, and which, when I wrote my brief history of her, I did not know she had actually composed. Mr. Dutens told me of it very lately, and actually borrowed it for me—and but yesterday my French bookseller sent me three-and-twenty other volumes of those *Mémoires Historiques*,¹ which I had ordered him to get for me, and which will keep my eyes to the oar for some time, whenever I have leisure to sail through such an ocean; and yet I shall embark with pleasure, late as it is for me to undertake such a hugeous voyage:—but a crew of old gossips are no improper company, and we shall sit in a warm cabin, and hear and tell old stories of past times.

Pray keep the volume as long as you please, and borrow as many more as you please, for each volume is a detached piece. Yet I do not suppose your friends will allow you much time for reading in town; and I hope I shall often be the better for their hindering you.

Yours most sincerely and most cordially.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 17, 1787.

I HAVE very little to tell you since we met but disappointments, and those of no great consequence.

On Friday night lady Pembroke wrote to me that princess Lubomirski was to dine with her the next day, and desired to come in the morning to see Strawberry.—Well, my castle put on its robes, breakfast was prepared, and I shoved another company out of the house, who had a ticket for seeing it. The sun shone, my hay was cocked, we looked divinely—and at half an hour after two, nobody came but a servant from lady Pembroke, to say

¹ Collection des meilleurs Ouvrages François composés par des femmes, by mademoiselle Keralio. [Or.] The original MS. is in the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris. [Ed.]

her Polish altitude had sent her word she had another engagement in town that would keep her too late:—so lady Pembroke's dinner was addled; and we had nothing to do, but like good Christians, if we chose it, to compel every body on the road, whether they chose it or not, to come in and eat our soup and biscuits. Methinks this *liberum veto* was rather impertinent, and I begin to think that the partition of Poland was very right.

Your brother has sent me a card for a ball on Monday, but I have excused myself. I have not yet compassed the whole circuit of my own garden, and I have had an inflammation in one of my eyes, and don't think I look as well as my house and my verdure; and had rather see my hay-cocks, than the duchess of Polignac and madame Lubomirski. *The way to keep him* had the way to get me, and I could crawl to it, because I had an inclination; but I have a great command of myself when I have no mind to do any thing. Lady Constant was worth an hundred *acs* and *irskis*.

Let me hear of you when you have nothing else to do; though I suppose you have as little to tell as you see I had.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry hill, July 28, 1787.

ST. SWITHIN is no friend to correspondence, my dear lord. There is not only a great sameness in his own proceedings, but he makes every body else dull—I mean in the country, where one frets at its raining every day and all day. In town he is no more minded than the proclamation against vice and immorality. Still, though he has all the honours of the quarantine, I believe it often rained for forty days long before St. Swithin was born, if ever born he was; and the proverb was coined and put under his patronage, because people observed that it frequently does rain for forty days together at this season. I remember lady Suffolk telling me, that lord Dysart's great meadow had never been mowed but once in forty years without rain. I said, “all that that proved was, that rain was good for hay,” as I am persuaded the climate of a country and its productions are suited to each other. Nay, rain is good for haymakers, too, who get more employment the oftener the hay is made over again. I do not

know who is the saint that presides over thunder; but he has made an unusual quantity in this chill summer, and done a great deal of serious mischief, though not a fiftieth part of what lord George Gordon did seven years ago—and happily he is fled.

Our little part of the world has been quiet as usual. The duke of Queensbury has given a sumptuous dinner to the princesse de Lamballe¹—*et voilà tout*. I never saw her, not even in France. I have no particular *penchant* for sterling princes and princesses, much less for those of French plate.

The only entertaining thing I can tell your lordship from our district is, that old madam French, who lives close by the bridge at Hampton-court, where, between her and the Thames, she had nothing but one grass-plot of the width of her house, has paved that whole plot with black and white marble in diamonds, exactly like the floor of a church; and this curious metamorphosis of a garden into a pavement has cost her three hundred and forty pounds:—a tarpaulin she might have had for some shillings, which would have looked as well, and might easily have been removed. To be sure this exploit, and lord Dudley's obelisk *below* a hedge, with his canal at right angles with the Thames, and a sham bridge no broader than that of a violin, and *parallel* to the river, are not preferable to the monsters in the clipt yews of our ancestors;

Bad taste expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.

On the contrary, Mrs. Walsingham is making her house at Ditton (now baptized Boyle-farm²) very orthodox. Her daughter miss Boyle,³ who has real genius, has carved three tablets in marble with boys designed by herself. Those sculptures are for a chimney-piece: and she is painting panels in grotesque for the

¹ La princesse de Lamballe, was sister to the prince de Carignan, of the royal house of Sardinia, and wife of the prince de Lamballe, only son to the duc de Penthièvre. She was sur-intendante de la maison de la reine, and, from her attachment to Marie Antoinette, was one of the first females who fell a victim to the fury of the French revolution. The peculiar circumstances of horror which attended her death, and the indignities offered to her corpse, must be in the memory of all who have ever perused the accounts of that fearful event. [Ed.]

² Boyle Farm, now the seat of lord de Roos, and the scene of lord Francis Egerton's pleasant little poem so called. [Ed.]

³ Afterwards married to lord Henry Fitzgerald. [Or.] See note, page 353. [Ed.]

library, with pilasters of glass in black and gold. Miss Crewe, who has taste, too, has decorated a room for her mother's house at Richmond, which was lady Margaret Compton's, in a very pretty manner. How much more amiable the old women of the next age will be, than most of those we remember, who used to tumble at once from gallantry to devout scandal and cards! and revenge on the young of their own sex the desertion of ours. Now they are ingenious, they will not want amusement.

Adieu, my dear lord!

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, October 14, 1787.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I am shocked for human nature at the repeated malevolence of this woman!—The rank soil of riches we are accustomed to see overrun with weeds and thistles; but who could expect that the kindest seeds sown on poverty and dire misfortunes, should meet with nothing but a rock at bottom; Catherine de Medici, suckled by popes and transplanted to a throne, seems more excusable. Thank heaven, madam, for giving you so excellent a heart—aye, and so good a head. You are not only benevolence itself, but, with fifty times the genius of * * * *, you are void of vanity. How strange that vanity should expel gratitude!—Does not the wretched woman owe her fame to you, as well as her affluence? I can testify your labours for both. Dame Yeardley¹ reminds me of the Troubadours, those vagrants whom I used to admire till I knew their history; and who used to pour out trumpery verses, and flatter or abuse accordingly as they were housed and clothed, or dismissed to the next parish:—Yet you did not set this person in the stocks, after procuring an annuity for her!

I beg your pardon for renewing so disgusting a subject, and will never mention it again. You have better amusement; you love good works; a temper superior to revenge.

I have again seen our poor friend in Clarges-street: her facul-

¹ Mrs. Yeardley, the Bristol milkwoman, whose dispute with her patroness was carried on with so much vehemence by both parties, as to shock the good taste and feelings of the public. [Ed.]

ties decay rapidly ; and of course she suffers less. She has not an acquaintance in town ; and yet told me the town was very full, and that she had had a good deal of company. Her health is re-established, and we must now be content that her mind is not restless. My pity now feels most for Mrs. Hancock,² whose patience is inexhaustible, though not insensible.

Mrs. Piozzi,³ I hear, has two volumes of Dr. Johnson's letters ready for publication. Bruce⁴ is printing his Travels ; which I suppose will prove that his narratives were fabulous, as he will scarce repeat them by the press. These, and two more volumes of Mr. Gibbon's History,⁵ are all the literary news I know. France seems sunk indeed in all respects. What stuff are their theatrical goods, their Richards, Ninas, and Tarares ! But when their Figaro could run threescore nights, how despicable must their taste be grown ! I rejoice that their political intrigues are not more creditable. I do not dislike the French from the vulgar antipathy between neighbouring nations, but for their insolent and unfounded airs of superiority. In arms we have almost always outshone them : and till they have excelled Newton, and come near to Shakspeare, pre-eminence in genius must remain with us. I think they are most entitled to triumph over the Italians, as with the most meagre and inharmonious of all languages, the French have made more of that poverty in tragedy and eloquence, than the Italians have done with the language the most capable of both——But I did not mean to send you a dissertation. I hope it will not be long before you remove to Hamp-

² A lady who lived with Mrs. Vesey. [Or.]

³ Mrs. Hester Lynch Piozzi. The volumes alluded to are her "Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., during the last twenty years of his life." London 1786. [Ed.]

⁴ Bruce's veracity, which has been so completely established by later travellers, was for a long time so generally doubted, that George Selwyn hearing him, in reply to the question, whether there were any musical instruments in Abyssinia, say, "I think I saw one *lyre* there," whispered his neighbour, "yes, and there is one less since he left the country." [Ed.]

⁵ The original publication of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire was in quarto, and as the volumes appeared singly, Gibbon used to take them to the duke of Cumberland. Conveying the third to him one day, and imagining, as he went, the handsome compliments which the duke would pay him, he was not a little mortified to hear his royal highness exclaim in his usual blunt manner, "What, eh, Gibbon, another damned big square book, eh !" [Ed.]

ton—Yet why should I wish that?—You will only be geographically nearer to London till February.—Cannot you now and then sleep at the Adelphi on a visit to poor Vesey and your friends, and let one know if you do?

Yours, my dear madam, most sincerely.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Nov. 11, 1787.

FROM violent contrary winds,¹ and by your letter going to Strawberry-hill, whence I was come, I have but just received it, and perhaps shall only be able to answer it by snatches, being up to the chin in nephews and nieces. * * * *

I find you knew nothing of the pacification when you wrote. When I saw your letter, I hoped it would tell me you was coming back, as your island is as safe as if it was situated in the Pacific Ocean, or at least as islands there used to be, till sir Joseph Banks chose to *put them up*. I sent you the good news on the very day before you wrote, though I imagined you would learn it by earlier intelligence. Well, I enjoy both your safety and your great success, which is enhanced by its being owing to your character and abilities. I hope the latter will be allowed to operate by those who have not quite so much of either.

I shall be wonderful glad to see little master Stonehenge² at Park-place: it will look in character there; but your own bridge is so stupendous in comparison, that hereafter the latter will be thought to have been a work of the Romans. Dr. Stukeley will burst his cerements to offer mistletoe in your temple; and Mason, on the contrary, will die of vexation and spite, that he cannot have Caractacus acted on the spot—Peace to all such!—

——— but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,

he would immortalize you, for all you have been carrying on in

¹ Mr. Conway was now in Jersey. [Or.]

² Mr. Walpole thus calls the small druidic temple discovered in Jersey, which the states of that island had presented to their governor general Conway to be transported to and crected at Park-place. [Or.]

Jersey, and for all you shall carry off. Inigo Jones, or Charlton,³ or somebody, I forget who, called Stonehenge “Chorea gigantum”—this will be the chorea of the pigmies—and as I forget, too, what is Latin for Lilliputians, I will make a bad pun, and say,

————— portantur avari
Pygmalionis opes—————

Pygmalion is as well-sounding a name for such a monarch as Oberon.—Pray do not disappoint me, but transport the cathedral⁴ of your island to your domain on our *continent*. I figure unborn antiquaries making pilgrimages to visit your bridge, your daughter’s bridge,⁵ and the druidic temple; and if I were not too old to have any imagination left, I would add a sequel to *Mi Li*.⁶ Adieu!

TO MR. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, May 8, 1788.

SINCE your draftsman was with me, sir, I can give you a little better answer to your queries than I could then extempore, especially as I had then a person with me on business. I have since been at Strawberry-hill, and though I recollected a rude sketch of the head of Charles VI. in Vertue’s MSS. I was so lucky as to find it, and enclose a still ruder sketch (for I never could draw well, and my lame fingers are still more incapable now). The attire of the head is precisely the same with that of our fourth Henry. Vertue’s account I have transcribed, too.—I was very sure I had seen somewhere an account of Joan of Na-

³ Dr. Walter Charlton, M.D., of whose life and works an account will be found in Wood’s *Athênæ*, Oxon., published a dissertation on Stonehenge in 1663, entitled “Chorea Gigantum; or the most famous antiquity of Great Britain, vulgarly called Stonehenge, standing on Salisbury Plain, restored to the Danes.” It was reprinted in 1715. [Ed.]

⁴ The druidic temple. [Or.]

⁵ The key stones of the centre arch of the bridge at Henley are ornamented with heads of the Thames and Isis, designed by the hon Mrs. Damer, and executed by her in Portland stone. [Or.]

⁶ One of the Hieroglyphic Tales, containing a description of Park-place. [Or.]

varre being suspected by Henry V. I looked into Stow, Holinshed, and Hall. But they mention no such thing, nor can I recollect where I found it; but Rapin does touch on it briefly in the place I have set down. Still I am positive I have seen rather a fuller account of it, though I cannot recall where. I hope, sir, you received the letter in which I told you of my imperfect negotiation with lord Monson about the pictures at Broxbourne, which I sent the day before your draftsman was with me, and directed to you, as you ordered, at Enfield.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant.

TO THOMAS BARRETT, Esq.¹

Berkeley-square, June 5, 1788.

I wish I could charge myself with any merit, which I always wish to have towards you, dear sir, in letting Mr. Matthew see Strawberry; but in truth, he has so much merit and modesty and taste himself, that I gave him the ticket with pleasure—which it seldom happens to me to do; for most of those who go thither, go because it is the fashion, and because *a party* is a prevailing custom, too; and my tranquillity is disturbed, because nobody likes to stay at home. If Mr. Matthew was really entertained, I am glad—but Mr. Wyatt has made him too correct a Goth not to have seen all the imperfections and bad execution of my attempts; for neither Mr. Bentley nor my workmen had *studied* the science, and I was always too desultory and impatient to consider that I should please myself more by allowing time, than by hurrying my plans into execution before they were ripe. My house, therefore, is but a sketch by beginners; yours is finished by a great master—and if Mr. Matthew liked mine, it was *en virtuose*, who loves the dawns of an art, or the glimmerings of its restoration.

I finished Mr. Gibbon a full fortnight ago, and was extremely pleased. It is a most wonderful mass of information, not only on history, but almost on all the ingredients of history, as war, government, commerce, coin, and what not. If it has a fault, it

¹ Of Lee, in Kent. [Or.]

is in embracing too much, and consequently in not detailing enough, and in striding backwards and forwards from one set of princes to another, and from one subject to another; so that, without much historic knowledge, and without much memory, and much method in one's memory, it is almost impossible not to be sometimes bewildered: nay, his own impatience to tell what he knows, makes the author, though commonly so explicit, not perfectly clear in his expressions. The last chapter of the fourth volume, I own, made me recoil, and I could scarcely push through it. So far from being catholic or heretic, I wished Mr. Gibbon had never heard of Monophysites, Nestorians, or any such fools!—But the sixth volume made ample amends; Mahomet and the popes were gentlemen and good company.—I abominate fractions of theology and reformation.

Mr. Sheridan, I hear, did not quite satisfy the passionate expectation that had been raised.²—But it was impossible he could, when people had worked themselves into an enthusiasm of offering fifty—aye, *fifty* guineas for a ticket to hear him. Well! we are sunk and deplorable in many points—yet not absolutely gone, when history and eloquence throw out such shoots! I thought I had outlived my country; I am glad not to leave it desperate! Adieu, dear sir!

Yours most sincerely.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Tuesday night, June 17, 1788.

I GUESS, my dear lord, and only guess, that you are arrived at Wentworth-castle. If you are not, my letter will lose none of its bloom by waiting for you; for I have nothing fresh to tell you, and only write because you enjoined it. I settled in my Lilliputian towers but this morning. I wish people would come into the country on May-day, and fix in town the first of November. But as they will not, I have made up my mind; and having so little time left, I prefer London, when my friends and society

² Of his speech in Westminster-hall, upon bringing forward one of the charges against Mr. Hastings. [Or.] The reader is referred to his Life, by Moore, for an account of the preparation of this celebrated philippic. [Ed.]

are in it, to living here alone, or with the weird sisters of Richmond and Hampton. I had additional reason now, for the streets are as green as the fields: we are burnt to the bone, and have not a lock of hay to cover our nakedness; oats are so dear, that I suppose they will soon be eaten at Brookes's and fashionable tables as a rarity. The drought has lasted so long, that for this fortnight I have been foretelling hay-making and winter, which June generally produces; but to-day is sultry, and I am not a prophet worth a straw. Though not resident till now, I have flitted backwards and forwards, and last Friday came hither to look for a minute at a ball at Mrs. Walsingham's at Ditton; which would have been very pretty, for she had stuck coloured lamps in the hair of all her trees and bushes, if the east wind had not danced a reel all the time by the side of the river.

Mr. Conway's play,¹ of which your lordship has seen some account in the papers, has succeeded delightfully, both in representation and applause. The language is most genteel, though translated from verse; and both prologue and epilogue are charming. The former was delivered most justly and admirably by lord Derby, and the latter with inimitable spirit and grace by Mrs. Damer. Mr. Merry and Mrs. Bruce played excellently, too.—But general Conway, Mrs. Damer, and every body else are drowned by Mr. Sheridan, whose renown has engrossed all fame's tongues and trumpets.² Lord Townshend said he should be sorry were he forced to give a vote directly on Hastings, before he had time to cool; and one of the peers saying the speech had not made the same impression on him, the marquis replied, a seal might be finely cut, and yet not be in fault for making a bad impression.

I have, you see, been forced to send your lordship what scraps I brought from town: the next four months, I doubt, will reduce me to my old sterility; for I cannot retail French

¹ A comedy, translated from *L'Homme du Jour*, of Boissy. It was first acted at the private theatre at Richmond-house, and afterward at Drury-lane. [Or.] It was entitled "Fashionable Friends." John Kemble, who was present at the performance at Richmond-house, requested permission to transplant it to Drury-lane, where, however, the indifferent success it met with by no means bore out Walpole's statements. [Ed.]

² From the speech he made in Westminster-hall, on bringing the charge of cruelty to the Begums of the province of Benares, in the trial of Mr. Hastings. [Or.]

gazettes, though as a good Englishman bound to hope they will contain a civil war. I care still less about the double imperial campaign, only hoping that the poor dear Turks will heartily beat both emperor and empress. If the first Ottomans could be punished, they deserved it—but the present possessors have as good prescription on their side as any people in Europe. We ourselves are Saxons, Danes, Normans—our neighbours are Franks, not Gauls—who the rest are, Goths, Gepidæ, Heruli, Mr. Gibbon knows—and the Dutch usurped the estates of herrings, turbot, and other marine indigenæ. Still, though I do not wish the hair of a Turk's beard to be hurt, I do not say that it would not be amusing to have Constantinople taken—merely as a lusty event—for neither could I live to see Athens revive, nor have I much faith in two such bloody-minded vultures, cock and hen, as Catherine and Joseph, conquering for the benefit of humanity; nor does my christianity admire the propagation of the gospel by the mouth of cannon. What desolation of peasants and their families by the episodes of forage and quarters!—Oh! I wish Catherine and Joseph were brought to Westminster-hall and worried by Sheridan! I hope, too, that the poor Begums are alive to hear of his speech—it will be some comfort, though I doubt nobody thinks of restoring them a quarter of a lac!

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 4, 1788.

I AM soundly rejoiced, my dear madam, that the present summer is more favourable to me than the last; and that, instead of not answering my letters in three months, you open the campaign first.—May not I flatter myself that it is a symptom of your being in better health? I wish however you had told me so in positive words, and that all your complaints have left you. Welcome as is your letter, it would have been ten times more welcome bringing me that assurance; for don't think I forget how ill you was last winter. As letters, you say, now keep their coaches,¹ I hope those from Bristol will call often at my door. I promise you I will never be denied to them.

¹ Meaning the establishment of the mail-coach. [Or.]

No botanist am I ; nor wished to learn from *you* of all the muses that *piping* has a new signification. I had rather that *you* handled an oaten pipe than a carnation one—yet setting layers, I own, is preferable to reading newspapers, one of the chronical maladies of this age. Everybody reads them, though everybody knows they are stuffed with lies or blunders. How should it be otherwise? If any extraordinary event happens, who but must hear it before it descends through a coffee house to the runner of a daily paper? They who are always wanting news, are wanting to hear they don't know what. A lower species indeed is that of the scribes you mention, who every night compose a journal for the satisfaction of such *illiterati*, and feed them with all the vices and misfortunes of every private family—nay, they now call it a *duty* to publish all those calamities which decency to wretched relations used in compassion to suppress—I mean self-murder in particular. Mr. * * * *s was detailed at length ; and to-day that of lord * * * * and * * * *. The pretence is, *in terrorem*, like the absurd stake and highway of our ancestors; as if there were a precautionary potion for madness, or the stigma of a newspaper were more dreadful than death. Daily journalists, to be sure, are most respectable magistrates ! Yes, much like the cobblers that Cromwell made peers.

I do lament your not going to Mr. Conway's play : both the author and actors deserved such an auditor as you, and you deserved to hear them.—However, I do not pity *good* people, who out of virtue lose or miss any pleasures. Those pastimes fleet as fast as those of the wicked ; but when gone, you saints can sit down and feast on your self-denial, and drink bumpers of satisfaction to the health of your own merit—So truly I don't pity you.

You say you hear no news, yet you quote Mr. Topham ;²

² Major Edward Topham was the son of Francis Topham, LL.D., against whom Sterne's first production, "The Adventures of an old Watch-coat," was directed. He was a major in the Life Guards, and the associate of all the literary men of the day, who readily assisted him when he established "*The World*," the Morning Post of its time, and which he set up for the purpose of thereby writing up his fair friend, the beautiful Mrs. Wells, of Drury-lane Theatre ; upon whose death he resigned the management of that paper, and retired to Yorkshire. He was the friend of Elwes, and it was owing to his good offices that that eccentric person left his property to his two sons, who were natural children. Topham's Life of Elwes,

therefore why should I tell you that the king is going to Cheltenham? or that the Baccelli lately danced at the opera at Paris with a blue bandeau on her forehead, inscribed, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*?—Now who can doubt but she is as pure as the countess of Salisbury?³ Was not it ingenious? and was not the ambassador so to allow it?—No doubt he took it for a compliment to his own knee.

Well! would we committed nothing but follies! What do we not commit when the abolition of the slavery hitches!

— Though Cato died, though Tully spoke,
Though Brutus dealt the god-like stroke,
Yet perish'd fated Rome!—

You have written; and I fear that even if Mr. Sheridan speaks, trade, the modern religion, will predominate. Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most sincerely.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 12, 1788.

WON'T you repent having opened the correspondence, my dear madam, when you find my letters come so thick upon you? In this instance, however, I am only to blame in part, for being too ready to take advice, for the sole reason for which advice ever is taken, because it fell in with my inclination.

You said in your last that you feared you took up time of mine to the prejudice of the public; implying, I imagine, that I might employ it in composing. Waving both your compliment and my own vanity, I will speak very seriously to you on that subject, and with exact truth. My simple writings have had better fortune than they had any reason to expect; and I fairly believe, in a great degree, because gentlemen-writers, who do not write for interest, are treated with some civility if they do not write absolute nonsense. I think so, because I have not unfre-

which he published in 1791, was pronounced by Walpole "one of the best anecdotal books in the English language." [Ed.]

³ The countess of Salisbury, to the fall of whose garter has been attributed the foundation of the Garter. [Or.]

quently known much better works than mine much more neglected, if the name, fortune, and situation of the authors were below mine. I wrote early, from youth, spirits and vanity, and from both the last when the first no longer existed. I now shudder when I reflect on my own boldness; and with mortification, when I compare my own writings with those of any great authors. This is so true, that I question whether it would be possible for me to sum up courage to publish any thing I have written, if I could recall time past, and should yet think as I think at present.—So much for what is over and out of my power. As to writing now, I have totally forsworn the profession, for two solid reasons. One I have already told you, and it is, that I know my own writings are trifling and of no depth. The other is, that, light and futile as they were, I am sensible they are better than I could compose now. I am aware of the decay of the middling parts I had, and others may be still more sensible of it. How do I know but I am superannuated? Nobody will be so coarse as to tell me so—but if I published dotage, all the world would tell me so.—And who but runs that risk who is an author after seventy? What happened to the greatest author of this age, and who certainly retained a very considerable portion of his abilities for ten years after my age? Voltaire, at eighty-four I think, went to Paris to receive the incense, in person, of his countrymen, and to be witness of their admiration of a tragedy he had written at that Methusalem-age. Incense he did receive till it choked him; and at the exhibition of his play he was actually crowned with laurel in the box where he sat.—But what became of his poor play?—It died as soon as he did—was buried with him—and no mortal, I dare to say, has ever read a line of it since, it was so bad.

As I am neither by a thousandth part so great, nor a quarter so little, I will herewith send you a fragment that an accidental rencontre set me upon writing, and which I found so flat, that I would not finish it. Don't believe that I am either begging praise by the stale artifice of hoping to be contradicted; or that I think there is any occasion to make you discover my caducity. No; but the fragment contains a curiosity—English verses written by a French prince of the blood, and which at first I had a mind to add to my Royal and Noble Authors; but as he was not a Royal author of ours, and as I could not please

myself with an account of him, I shall revert to my old resolution of not exposing my pen's gray hairs.

Of one passage I must take notice; it is a little indirect sneer at our crowd of authoresses. My choosing to send this to *you* is a proof that I think you an author, that is, a classic. But in truth I am nauseated by the madams * * * *, &c., and the hosts of novel writers in petticoats, who think they imitate what is inimitable, Evelina and Cecilia. Your candour I know will not agree with me, when I tell you I am not at all charmed with miss * * * * and Mr. * * * * * piping to one another; but *you* I exhort, and would encourage to write; and flatter myself you will never be royally gagged and promoted to fold muslins, as has been lately wittily said on miss B * * *, in the list of 500 living authors. *Your* writings promote virtues; and their increasing editions prove their worth and utility.—If you question my sincerity, can you doubt my admiring you, when you have gratified my self-love so amply in your *Bas-bleu*? Still, as much as I love your writings, I respect yet more your heart and your goodness. You are so good, that I believe you would go to heaven, even though there were no Sunday, and only six *working* days in the week. Adieu, my best madam!

Yours most cordially.

P.S. On recollection, I doubt I have before given you the same reasons for my lying fallow that I have in this letter. If so, why it is like an old man to repeat himself—but at least I will not do so in print.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, August 2, 1788.

MATTER for a letter, alas! my dear lord, I have none—but *about* letters I have great news to tell your lordship, only may the goddess of post-offices grant it be true! A miss S * * * * of Richmond, who is at Paris, writes to Mrs. B * * * * *, that a baron de la Garde (I am sorry there are so many *a*'s in the genealogy of my story) has found in a *vieille armoire* five hundred more letters of madame de Sevigné, and that they will be printed, if the expense is not too great. I am in a taking lest they should

not appear before I set out for the Elysian fields ; for though the writer is not one of the first personages I should inquire after on my arrival, I question whether St. Peter has taste enough to know where she lodges : he is more likely to be acquainted with St. Catherine of Sienna and St. Undecimillia ; and therefore I had rather see the letters themselves. It is true I have no small doubt of the authenticity of the legend ; and nothing will persuade me of its truth so much as the non-appearance of the letters—a melancholy kind of conviction. But I vehemently suspect some new coinage, like the letters of Ninon de l'Enclos, pope Ganganelli, and the princess Palatine. I have lately been reading some fragments of letters of the duchess of Orleans,¹ which are certainly genuine, and contain some curious circumstances ; for though she was a simple gossiping old gentlewoman, yet, many little facts she could not help learning : and to give her her due, she was ready to tell all she knew. To our late queen she certainly did write often ; and her majesty, then only princess, was full as ready to pay her in her own coin, and a pretty considerable treaty of commerce for the exchange of scandal was faithfully executed between them ; insomuch that I remember to have heard forty years ago, that our gracious sovereign entrusted her royal highness of Orleans with an intrigue of one of her women of the bed-chamber, Mrs. S * * * to wit ; and the good duchess entrusted it to so many other dear friends, that at last it got into the Utrecht Gazette, and came over hither, to the signal edification of the court of Leicester-fields. This is an additional reason, besides the internal evidence, for my believing the letters genuine. This old dame was mother of the regent ; and when she died, somebody wrote on her tomb, *Cy gist l'Oisiveté*. This came over, too ; and nobody could expound it, till our then third princess, Caroline, unravelled it—Idleness is the mother of all vice.

I wish well enough to posterity to hope that dowager highnesses will imitate the practice, and write all the trifles that occupy their royal brains ; for the world so at least learns some

¹ They were published in 1790, under the title of “Fragments of Original Letters of madame Charlotte Elizabeth, of Bavaria, duchess of Orleans ; written from the year 1715 to 1720, to his Serene Highness Antony Ulric, duke of B—W— ; and to her Royal Highness, Caroline, Princess of Wales.” [Ed.]

true history, which their husbands never divulge; especially if they are privy to their own history, which their ministers keep from them as much as possible. I do not believe the present king of France knows much more of what he, or rather his queen, is actually doing, than I do. I rather pity him; for I believe he means well, which is not a common article of my faith.

I shall go about the end of this week to Park-place, where I expect to find the Druidic temple from Jersey erected. How dull will the world be, if constant pilgrimages are not made thither! where, besides the delight of the scenes, that temple, the rude great arch, lady Ailesbury's needle-works, and Mrs. Damer's Thame and Isis on Henley-bridge, with other of her sculptures, make it one of the most curious spots in the island, and unique. I want to have Mr. Conway's comedy acted there; and then the father, mother, and daughter would exhibit a theatre of arts as uncommon. How I regret that your lordship did not hear Mrs. Damer speak the epilogue!

I am, &c.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, September 12, 1788.

MY late fit of gout, though very short, was a very authentic one, my dear lord, and the third I have had since Christmas. Still, of late years, I have suffered so little pain, that I can justly complain of nothing but the confinement, and the debility of my hands and feet, which, however, I can still use to a certain degree; and, as I enjoy such good spirits and health in the intervals, I look upon the gout as no enemy: yet I know it is like the compacts said to be made with the devil (no kind comparison to a friend!) who showers his favours on the contractors, but is sure to seize and carry them off at last.

I would not say so much of myself, but in return for your lordship's obliging concern for me—yet, insignificant as the subject, I have no better in bank—and if I plume myself on the tolerable state of my outward man, I doubt your lordship finds that age does not treat my interior so mildly as the gout does the other. If my letters, as you are pleased to say, used to amuse

you, you must perceive how insipid they are grown, both from my decays, and from the little intercourse I have with the world. Nay, I take care not to aim at false vivacity: what do the attempts of age at liveliness prove but its weakness? What the Spectator said wittily, ought to be practised in sober sadness by old folks: when he was dull, he declared it was by design. So far, to be sure, we ought to observe it, as not to affect more spirits than we possess. To be purposely stupid, would be forbidding our correspondents to continue the intercourse; and I am so happy in enjoying the honour of your lordship's friendship, that I will be content (if you can be so) with my natural inanity, without studying to increase it.

I have been at Park-place, and assure your lordship that the Druidic temple vastly more than answers my expectations. Small it is, no doubt, when you are within the enclosure, and but a chapel of ease to Stonehenge. But Mr. Conway has placed it with so much judgment, that it has a lofty effect, and infinitely more than it could have had, if he had yielded to Mrs. Damer's and my opinion, who earnestly begged to have it placed within the enclosure of the home-grounds. It now stands on the ridge of the high hill without, backed by the horizon, and with a grove on each side at a little distance; and being exalted beyond and above the range of firs that climb up the sides of the hill from the valley, wears all the appearance of an ancient castle, whose towers are only shattered, not destroyed; and devout as I am to old castles, and small taste as I have for the ruins of ages absolutely barbarous, it is impossible not to be pleased with so very rare an antiquity so absolutely perfect, and it is difficult to prevent visionary ideas from improving a prospect.

If, as lady Anne Conolly told your lordship, I have had a great deal of company, you must understand it of my house, not of me; for I have very little. Indeed, last Monday both my house and I were included. The duke of York sent me word the night before, that he would come and see it, and of course I had the honour of showing it myself. He said, and indeed it seemed so, that he was much pleased; at least, I had every reason to be satisfied; for I never saw any prince more gracious and obliging, nor heard one utter more personally kind speeches.

I do not find that *her grace* the countess of Bristol's¹ will is

¹ The duchess of Kingston. [Or.]

really known yet. They talk of two wills—to be sure, in her double capacity; and they say she has made three co-heiresses to her jewels, the empress of Russia, lady Salisbury, and the whore of Babylon. The first of those legatees, I am not sorry, is in a piteous scrape:² I like the king of Sweden no better than I do her and the emperor: but it is good that two destroyers should be punished by a third, and that two crocodiles should be gnawed by an insect. Thank God! *we* are not only at peace, in full plenty—nay, and in full beauty, too. Still better: though we have had rivers of rain, it has not, contrary to all precedent, washed away our warm weather. September, a month I generally dislike for its irresolute mixture of warm and cold, has hitherto been peremptorily fine. The apple and walnut trees bend down with fruit, as in a poetic description of Paradise.

I am yours, &c.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 22, 1788.

I DON'T like to defraud you of your compassion, my good friend, profuse as you are of it. I really suffered scarce any pain at all from my last fit of the gout. I have known several persons who think there is a dignity in complaining; and if you ask how they do, reply—Why—I *am*—pretty well—to-day; but if you knew what I suffered *yesterday!*—Now methinks nobody has a right to tax another for pity on what is past; and besides, complaint of what is over can only make the hearer glad you are in pain no longer. Yes, yes, my dear madam, you generally place your pity so profitably, that you shall not waste a drop upon me, who ought rather to be congratulated on being so well at my age.

Much less shall I allow you to make apologies for your admirable and proper conduct towards your poor *protégée*. And now you have told me the behaviour of a certain great dame, I will confess to you that I have known it some months by accident—

² The war with Sweden. [Ed.]

nay, and tried to repair it. I prevailed on lady * * * * *, who as readily undertook the commission, and told the countess of her treatment of you—Alas ! the answer was, “It is too late ; I have no money.” No ! but she has, if she has a diamond left. I am indignant—yet, do you know, not at this duchess, or that countess, but at the invention of ranks, and titles, and pre-eminence. I used to hate that king and t’other prince—but, alas ! on reflection I find the censure ought to fall on human nature in general. They are made of the same stuff as we, and dare we say what we should be in their situation ? Poor creatures ! think how they are educated, or rather, corrupted early, how flattered ! To be educated properly, they should be led through hovels, and hospitals, and prisons. Instead of being reprimanded (and perhaps immediately after *sugar-plum’d*) for not learning their Latin or French grammar, they now and then should be kept fasting, and if they cut their finger, should have no plaister till it festered. No part of a royal brat’s memory, which is good enough, should be burthened but with the remembrance of human sufferings. In short, I fear our nature is so liable to be corrupted and perverted by greatness, rank, power, and wealth, that I am inclined to think that virtue is the compensation to the poor for the want of riches—nay, I am disposed to believe, that the first footpad or highwayman had been a man of quality, or a prince, who could not bear having wasted his fortune, and was too lazy to work ; for a beggar-born would think labour a more natural way of getting a livelihood than venturing his life. I have something like a similar opinion about common women. No modest girl thinks of many men, till she has been in love with *one*, been ruined by him, and abandoned.—But to return to my theme—and it will fall heavy on yourself.—Could the milk-woman have been so bad, if you had merely kept her from starving, instead of giving her opulence ? The soil, I doubt, was bad ; but it could not have produced the rank weed of ingratitude, if you had not dunged it with gold, which rises from rock, and seems to meet with a congenial bed when it falls on the human heart.

And so Dr. Warton imagines I am writing Walpoliana ! No, in truth, nor any thing else, nor shall—nor will I go out in a jest-book. Age has not only made me prudent, but, luckily, lazy—and without the latter extinguisher, I do not know but that farthing candle my discretion would let my snuff of life flit

to the last sparkle of folly, like what children call the parson and clerk in a bit of burnt paper. You see by my *writability* in pressing my letters on you, that my pen has still a colt's tooth left; but I never indulge the poor old child with more paper than this small-sized sheet—I do not give it enough to make a paper kite, and fly abroad on wings of booksellers. *You* ought to continue writing, for you do good by your writings, or, at least, mean it; and if a virtuous intention fails, it is a sort of coin, which, though thrown away, still makes the donor worth more than he was before he gave it away. I delight, too, in the temperature of your piety, and that you would not see the enthusiastic exorcist. How shocking to suppose that the Omnipotent Creator of worlds delegates his power to a momentary insect to eject supernatural spirits that he had permitted to infest another insect, and had permitted to vomit blasphemies against himself!—Pray do not call *that* enthusiasm, but delirium. I pity real enthusiasts, but I would shave their heads and take away some blood. The exorcist's associates are in a worse predicament, I doubt, and hope to *make* enthusiasts. If such abominable impostors were not rather a subject of indignation, I could smile at the rivalry between them and the animal magnetists, who are inveigling fools into their different pales. And, alas! while folly has a shilling left, there will be enthusiasts and quack-doctors, and there will be slaves while there are kings or sugar-planters. I have remarked, that though Jesuits, &c. travel to distant East and West to propagate their religion and traffic, I never heard of one that made a journey into Asia or Africa to preach the doctrines of liberty, though those regions are so deplorably oppressed. Nay, I much doubt whether ever any chaplain of the regiments we have sent to India has once whispered to a native of Bengal, that there are milder forms of government than those of his country. —No; security of property is not a wholesome doctrine to be inculcated in a land where the soil produces diamonds and gold! —In short, if your Bristol exorcist believes he can cast out devils, why does he not go to Leadenhall-street? There is a company whose name is legion.

By your *gambols*, as you call them, after the most ungamboling peeress in Christendom, and by your jaunts, I conclude to my great satisfaction that you are quite well. Change of scene and air are good for your spirits; and September, like all our old

ladies, has given itself May airs, and must have made your journey very pleasant—yet you will be glad to get back to your Cowslip-green, though it may offer you nothing but Michaelmas daisies. When you do leave it, I wish you could persuade Mrs. Garrick to settle sooner in London. There is full as good hay to be made in town at Christmas as at Hampton, and some hay-makers that will wish for you, particularly

Your most sincere friend.

TO LADY CRAVEN.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 11, 1788.

IT is agreeable to your ladyship's usual goodness to honour me with another letter—and I may say to your equity, too, after I had proved to monsieur Mercier, by the list of dates of my letters, that it was not mine but the post's fault, that you did not receive one that I had the honour of writing to you about a year ago. Not, madam, that I could wonder if you had the prudence to drop a correspondence with an old superannuated man, who, conscious of his decay, has had the decency of not troubling with his dotages persons of not near your ladyship's youth and vivacity. I have long been of opinion that few persons know *when* to die—I am not so English as to mean when to dispatch themselves—no, but when to go out of the world. I have usually applied this opinion to those who have made a considerable figure, and consequently it was not adapted to myself. Yet even we cyphers ought not to fatigue the public scene when we are become lumber. Thus, being quite out of the question, I will explain my maxim, which is more wholesome, the higher it is addressed. My opinion then is, that when any personage has shewn as much as is possible in his or her best walk (and not to repeat both genders every minute, I will use the male as the common of the two), he should take up his Strulbrugism, and be heard of no more. Instances will be still more explanatory. Voltaire ought to have pretended to die after *Alzire*, *Mahomet*, and *Semiramis*, and not have produced his wretched last pieces. Lord Chatham should have closed his political career with his immortal war—And how weak was Garrick, when he had quitted

the stage, to limp after the tatters of fame by writing and reading pitiful poems, and even by *sitting* to read plays which he had acted with such fire and energy?—We have another example in Mr. Anstey; who, if he had a friend on earth, would have been obliged to him for being knocked on the head the moment he had published the *first* edition of the Bath Guide; for even in the second he had exhausted his whole stock of inspiration, and has never written any thing tolerable since. When such unequal authors print their works together, one may apply in a new light the old hacked simile of Mezentius, who tied together the living and the dead.

We have just received the works of an author from whom I find I am to receive much less entertainment than I expected, because I shall have much less to read than I intended. His Memoirs, I am told, are almost wholly military, which, therefore, I shall not read—and his poetry, I am sure, I shall not look at, because I should understand it.—What I saw of it formerly convinced me that it would not have been a poet, even if he had written in his own language; and though I do not understand German, I am told it is a fine language; and I can easily believe that any tongue (not excepting our old barbarous Saxon, which, a bit of an antiquary as I am, I abhor) is more harmonious than French. It was curious absurdity, therefore, to pitch on the most unpoetic language in Europe, the most barren, and the most clogged with difficulties. I have heard Russian and Polish sung, and both sounded musical—but to abandon one's own tongue, and not adopt Italian, that is even sweeter and softer and more copious than the Latin, was a want of taste that I should think could not be applauded even by a Frenchman born in Provence. But what a language is the French, which measures verses by feet that never are to be pronounced, which is the case wherever the mute *e* is found! What poverty of various sounds for rhyme, when, lest similar cadences should too often occur, their mechanic bards are obliged to marry masculine and feminine terminations as alternately as the black and white squares of a chess-board! Nay, will you believe me madam? Yes, you will; for you may convince your own eyes, that a scene of *Zaire* begins with three of the most nasal adverbs that ever snorted together in a breath. *Enfin, donc, desormais*, are the culprits in question. *Enfin, donc*, need I tell your ladyship, that the author I

alluded to at the beginning of this long tirade is the late king of Prussia.¹

I am conscious that I have taken a little liberty when I excommunicate a tongue in which your ladyship has condescended to write—but I only condemn it for verse and pieces of eloquence, of which I thought it alike incapable, till I read Rousseau of Geneva. It is a most sociable language, and charming for narrative and epistles. Yet, write as well as you will in it, you must be liable to express yourself better in the speech natural to you; and your own country has a right to understand all your works, and is jealous of their not being as perfect as you could make them. Is it not more creditable to be translated into a foreign language than into your own? and will it not vex you to hear the translation taken for the original, and to find vulgarisms that you could not have committed yourself? But I have done, and will release you, madam; only observing, that you flatter me with a vain hope when you tell me you shall return to England some time or other. Where will that time be for me?—and when it arrives shall I not be somewhere else?

I do not pretend to send your ladyship English news, nor to tell you of English literature. You must before this time have heard of the dismal state into which our chief personage is fallen!² The two houses are going to settle some intermediate succedaneum, and *the obvious one*, no doubt will be fixed on.

This letter, I hope, will be more fortunate than my last. I should be very unhappy to seem again ungrateful, when I have the honour of being with the greatest respect,

Madam,

Your ladyship's most obliged
and most humble servant.

¹ The correspondent of Voltaire. His works occupy twelve or fifteen volumes. [Ed.]

² The mental alienation of George III.; the first symptoms of which were perceived by his attendants on the 22d October 1788; and from which he was pronounced perfectly recovered on the 25th February following, before the Regency Bill passed the Lords. [Ed.]

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, April 22, 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

As perhaps you have not yet seen the *Botanic Garden*¹ (which I believe I mentioned to you), I lend it you to read. The poetry, I think, you will allow most admirable; and difficult it was no doubt. If you are not a naturalist, as well as a poetess, perhaps you will lament that so powerful a talent has been wasted to so little purpose; for where is the use of describing in verse what nobody can understand without a long prosaic explanation of every article? It is still more unfortunate that there is not a symptom of plan in the whole poem. The lady flowers and their lovers enter in pairs or trios, &c. or, as often as the couples in Cassandra, and you are not a whit more interested about one heroine and her swain than about another. The similies are beautiful, fine, and sometimes sublime: and thus the episodes will be better remembered than the mass of the poem itself, which one cannot call *the subject*; for could one call it a subject, if any body had composed a poem on the matches formerly made in the Fleet, where, as Waitwell says, in *The Way of the World*, they stood like couples in rows ready to begin a country dance?—Still, I flatter myself, you will agree with me that the author is a great poet, and could raise the passions, and possesses all the requisites of the art. I found but a single bad verse: in the last canto one line ends *e'er long*.

You will perhaps be surprised at meeting a Truffle converted into a nymph, and inhabiting a palace studded with emeralds and rubies like a saloon in the *Arabian Nights*!

I had a more particular motive for sending this poem to *you*: you will find the bard espousing your poor Africans. There is besides, which will please you, too, a handsome panegyric on *the apostle of humanity*, Mr. Howard.

Mrs. Garrick, whom I had the pleasure of meeting in her own box at Mr. Conway's play, gave me a much better account of your health, which delighted me. I am sure, my good friend,

¹ By Dr. Darwin. It is now in little estimation. 'These "Loves of the Flowers" will probably be remembered hereafter only as having given rise to Canning's "Loves of the Triangles." [Ed.]

you partake of my joy at the great success of his comedy. The additional character of the abbé pleased much—It was added by the advice of the players to enliven it—that is, to stretch the jaws of the pit and galleries.—I sighed silently; for it was originally so genteel and of a piece, that I was sorry to have it tumbled by coarse applauses—But this is a secret.

I am going to Twickenham for two days on an assignation with the Spring, and to avoid the riotous devotion of to-morrow.

A gentleman essayist has printed what he calls some strictures on my Royal and Noble Authors, in revenge for my having spoken irreverently (on bishop Burnet's authority) of the earl of Anglesey, who had the honour, it seems, of being the gentleman's grandfather. He asks me, by the way, why it was more ridiculous in the duke of Newcastle to write his two comedies, than in the duke of Buckingham to write *The Rehearsal*?—Alas! I know but one reason; which is, that it is less ridiculous to write one excellent comedy, than two very bad ones. Peace be with such answerers! Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most cordially.

TO MR. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, May 28, 1789.

MR. WALPOLE is extremely ashamed of receiving so magnificent a present from Mr. Gough, and yet thinks it would be a want of the respect and gratitude he owes him, not to accept it with a thousand thanks, and with the admiration it deserves, and to which the voice of the public will certainly give its deserved praise, and in which Mr. Gough's well known judgment and accuracy is not likely to have left any errors, and none, Mr. Walpole is very sure, that he is capable of finding. Mr. Walpole begs pardon of Mr. Gough for not thanking him with his own hand; but has been very ill with the gout for this month, and is not yet able to write himself.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, June 23, 1789.

MADAM HANNAH,

You are an errant reprobate, and grow wickeder and wickeder every day. You deserve to be treated like a *negre*; and your favourite Sunday, to which you are so partial that you treat the other poor six days of the week as if they had no souls to be saved, should, if I could have my will,

———— shine no Sabbath-day for you.

Now, don't simper, and look as innocent as if virtue would not melt in your mouth—Can you deny the following charges?

I lent you *The Botanic Garden*, and you returned it without writing a syllable, or saying where you were or whither you was going—I suppose for fear I should know how to direct to you.—Why, if I did send a letter after you, could not you keep it three months without an answer, as you did last year?

In the next place, you and your *nine* accomplices, who by the way are too good in keeping you company, have clubbed the prettiest¹ poem imaginable, and communicated it to Mrs. Boscawen, with injunctions not to give a copy of it.—I suppose, because you are ashamed of having written a panegyric.—Whenever you *do* compose a satire, you are ready enough to publish it—at least whenever you do, you will din one to death with it.—But now, mind your perverseness: that very pretty novel poem, and I must own it is charming, have you gone and spoiled, flying in the faces of your best friends, the muses, and keeping no *measures* with them.—I'll be shot if they dictated two of the best lines with two syllables too much in each—nay, you have weakened one of them—

Ev'n Gardiner's mind

is far more expressive than *steadfast* Gardiner's—and, as Mrs. Boscawen says, whoever knows any thing of Gardiner, could not want that superfluous epithet—and whoever does not, would not be the wiser for your foolish insertion—Mrs. Boscawen did not all it foolish, but I do.

¹ Bonner's Ghost. [Or.]

The second line, as mesdemoiselles the muses handed it to you, miss, was,

And all be free and saved—

Not, *All be free and all be saved*: the second *all be* is a most unnecessary tautology. The poem was perfect and faultless, if you could have let it alone. I wonder how your mischievous flippancy could help maiming that most new and beautiful expression, *sponge of sins*—I should not have been surprised, as you love verses too full of feet, if you had changed it to *that scrubbing-brush of sins*.

Well! I will say no more now: but if you do not order me a copy of Bonner's Ghost incontinently, never dare to look my printing-house in the face again—Or come, I'll tell you what; I will forgive all your enormities, if you will let me print your poem. I like to filch a little immortality out of others, and the Strawberry press could never have a better opportunity. I will not haggle for the public—I will be content with printing only two hundred copies, of which you shall have half, and I half. It shall cost you nothing but a Yes. I only propose this, in case you do not mean to print it yourself. Tell me sincerely which you like—But as to not printing it at all, charming and unexceptionable as it is, you cannot be so preposterous.

I by no means have a thought of detracting from your own share in your own poem; but, as I do suspect that it caught some inspiration from your perusal of the Botanic Garden, so I hope you will discover that *my* style is much improved by having lately studied * * * *s travels.—There I dipped, and not in St. Giles' pound, where one would think this author had been educated. Adieu!

Your friend, or mortal foe, as you behave on the present occasion.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 2, 1789.

I ALMOST think I shall never abuse you again—nay, I would not, did not it prove so extremely good for you. No walnut-tree

is better for being threshed than you are; and though you have won my heart by your compliance, I don't know whether my conscience will not insist on my using you ill now and then; for is there any precedent for gratitude not giving way to every other duty? Gratitude, like an earl's eldest son, is but titular, and has no place upon *trials*——But I fear I am punning sillily, instead of thanking you seriously, as I do, for allowing me to print your lovely verses. My press can confer no honour; but, when I offer it, it is a certain mark of my sincerity and esteem. It has been dedicated to friendship, to charity—too often to worthless self-love; sometimes to the rarity of the pieces, and sometimes to the merit of them——now it will unite the first motive and the last.

My fall, for which you so kindly concern yourself, was not worth mentioning; for as I only bruised the muscles of my side, instead of breaking a rib, camphire infused in arquebusade took off the pain and all consequences in five or six days: and one has no right to draw on the compassion of others for what one *has* suffered and is past. Some love to be pitied on that score, but forget that they only excite, in the best-natured, joy on their deliverance. You commend me, too, for not complaining of my chronical evil—but, my dear madam, I should be blameable for the reverse. If I would live to seventy-two, ought I not to compound for the encumbrances of old age? And who has fewer? And who has more cause to be thankful to Providence for his lot? The gout, it is true, comes frequently, but the fits are short, and very tolerable; the intervals are full health. My eyes are perfect, my hearing but little impaired, chiefly to whispers, for which I certainly have little occasion: my spirits never fail; and though my hands and feet are crippled, I can use both, and do not wish to box, wrestle, or dance a hornpipe. In short, I am just infirm enough to enjoy all the prerogatives of old age, and to plead them against any thing that I have not a mind to do. Young men must conform to every folly in fashion, drink when they had rather be sober, fight a duel if somebody else is wrong-headed, marry to please their fathers, not themselves, and shiver in a white waistcoat, because ancient almanacs, copying the Arabian, placed the month of June after May; though, when the style was reformed, it ought to have been intercalated between December and January.—Indeed, I have been so childish as to

cut my hay for the same reason, and am now weeping over it by the fireside.—But to come to business.

You must suffer me to print 200 copies; and if you approve it, I will send thirty to the bishop of London out of your quota—You may afterwards give him more, if you please.

I do not propose putting your name, unless you desire it, as I think it would swear with the air of ancients you have adopted in the signature and notes. The authoress will be no secret—and as it will certainly get into magazines, why should not you deal privately before-hand with some bookseller, and have a second edition ready to appear soon after mine is finished? The difficulty of getting my edition at first, from the paucity of the number, and from being only given as presents, will make the second edition eagerly sought for; and I do not see why my anticipating the publication should deprive you of the profit.—Rather than do that, I would print a smaller number.—I wish to raise an additional appetite to that which every body has for your writings—I am sure I did not mean to injure you. Pray think of this; there is time enough: I cannot begin to print under a week: my press has lain fallow for some time, and my printer must prepare ink, balls, &c.; and as I have but one man, he cannot be expeditious.

I seriously do advise you to have a second edition ready: why should covetous booksellers run away with *all* the advantages of your genius? They get enough by their ample share of the sale.

I will say no more, but to repeat my thanks for your consent, which truly obliges me; and I am happy to have been the instrument of preserving what your modesty would have sunk. My esteem could not increase; but one likes to be connected by favours to those one highly values.

I am, dear madam, yours, &c.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, July 10, 1789.

THOUGH I am touchy enough with those I love, I did not think you dilatory, nor expect that answers to letters should be as quick as repartees. I do pity you for the accident that made

you think yourself remiss. I enjoy your patient's recovery ; but almost smiled unawares at the idea of her being sopped, and coming out of the water bristling up her feathers and ermines, and assuming the dignity of a Jupiter Pluvius.

I beseech you not to fancy yourself vain on my being your printer : would Sappho be proud, though Aldus¹ or Elzevir² were her typographer ? My press has no rank but from its narrowness, that is, from the paucity of its editions, and from being a volunteer. — But a truce to compliments, and to reciprocal humility. Pray tell me how I shall convey your parcel to you : the impression is begun. I shall not dare, *vû le sujet* to send a copy to Mrs. * * * * ; I do not know whether you will venture. Mrs. Boscawen shall have one, but it shall be in your name : so authorize me to present it, that neither of us may tell the whitest of fibs. Shall I deliver any others for you within my reach, to save you trouble ?

I have no more corrections to make. I told you brutally at first of the only two faults I found, and you sacrificed them with the patience of a martyr ; for I conclude that when a good poet knowingly sins against measure twice, he is persuaded that he makes amends by greater beauties : in such case docility deserves the palm-branch.

I do not applaud your declining a London edition—but you have been so tractable, that I will let you have your way in this, though you only make over profit to magazines. Being an honest printer myself, I have little charity for those banditti of my profession who pilfer from every body they find on the road. Adieu, my dear madam !

Yours most cordially and sincerely.

¹ Aldus Manutius, the first of the celebrated printers of the fifteenth century at Venice, who were as renowned for their learning as for their uncommon skill in their profession, was the first who printed Greek with any accuracy or neatness. [Ed.]

² The Elzevir family were celebrated printers at Leyden and Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, who produced many beautiful editions of the principal classics. [Ed.]

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night.

I WRITE a few lines only to confirm the truth of much of what you will read in the papers from Paris. Worse may already be come, or is expected every hour.

Mr. * * * and lady * * * called on me before dinner, after the post was gone out; and he showed me a letter from D * * *, who said two couriers arrived yesterday from the duke of Dorset and the duchess of Devonshire, the latter of whom was leaving Paris directly. Necker had been dismissed, and was thought to be set out for Geneva. Breteuil, who was at his country-house, had been sent for to succeed him. Paris was in an uproar; and, after the couriers had left it, firing of cannon was heard for four hours together. That must have been from the Bastille,¹ as probably the *tiers état* were not so provided. It is shocking to imagine what may have happened in such a thronged city!

One of the couriers was stopped twice or thrice, as supposed to pass from the king; but redeemed himself by pretending to be dispatched by the *tiers état*. Madame de Colonne told D * * * that the newly encamped troops desert by hundreds.

Here seems the egg to be hatched, and imagination runs away with the idea. I may fancy I shall hear of the king and queen leaving Versailles, like Charles I.—and then skips imagination six-and-forty years lower, and figures their fugitive majesties taking refuge in this country.

I have besides another idea. If the Bastille conquers, still is it impossible, considering the general spirit in the country, and the numerous fortified places in France, but some may be seized by the *dissidents*, and whole provinces be torn from the crown?—On the other hand, if the king prevails, what heavy despotism will the *états*, by their want of temper and moderation, have drawn on their country! They might have obtained many capital points, and removed great oppression—no French monarch will ever summon *états* again, if this moment has been thrown away.

¹ The destruction of the Bastille took place on the 14th July 1789, during the sitting of the National Assembly, convened by Louis XVI. [Ed.]

Though I have stocked myself with such a set of visions for the event either way, I do not pretend to foresee what will happen. Penetration argues from reasonable probabilities ; but chance and folly are apt to contradict calculation, and hitherto they seem to have full scope for action. One hears of no genius on either side, nor do symptoms of any appear. There will, perhaps: such times and tempests bring forth, at least bring out, great men. I do not take the duke of Orleans or Mirabeau² to be built *du bois dont on les fait*—no; nor monsieur Necker. He may be a great traitor, if he made the confusion designedly:—but it is a woful evasion, if the promised financier slips into a black politician. I adore liberty, but I would bestow it as honestly as I could; and a civil war, besides being a game of chance, is paying a very dear price for it.

For us, we are in most danger of a deluge; though I wonder we so frequently complain of long rains. The saying about St. Swithin is a proof of how often they recur; for proverbial sentences are the children of experience, not of prophecy. Good night!—In a few days I shall send you a beautiful little poem³ from the Strawberry press.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Monday night, July 20, 1789.

MY EXCELLENT FRIEND,

I never shall be angry with your conscientiousness, though I will not promise never to scold it, as you know I think you sometimes carry it too far—and how pleasant to have a friend to scold on such grounds. I see all your delicacy in what you call your *double treachery*, and your kind desire of connecting two of your friends. The seeds are sprung up already; and the bishop¹ has already condescended to make me the first, and

² The best account of this brilliant, but unprincipled man, will be found in “Dumont’s Souvenirs sur Mirabeau,” a work which illustrates not only the working of the French Revolution, but the conduct of the principal actors in that event, and the scenes which preceded it. [Ed.]

³ This was Bonner’s Ghost. [Or.]

¹ The bishop of London, [Or.] Dr. Beilby Porteus. This distinguished

indeed so unexpected a visit, that, had I in the least surmised it, I should certainly, as became me, have prevented him.

One effect, however, I can tell you, your pimping between us will have:—his lordship has, to please your partiality, flattered me so agreeably in the letter you *betrayed*, that I shall never write to you again without the dread of attempting the wit he is so liberal as to bestow on me; and then either way I must be dull or affected—though I hope to have the grace to prefer the former—and then you only will be the sufferer, as we both should by the latter.—But I will come to facts: they are plain bodies, can have nothing to do with wit, and yet are not dull to those who have any thing to do with them.

According to your order, I have delivered *Ghosts* to Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, lady Juliana Penn, Mrs. Walsingham, and Mr. Pepys. Mr. Batt, I am told, leaves London to-day, so I shall reserve his to his return. This morning I carried his thirty to the bishop of London, who said modestly, that he should not have expected above ten. I was delighted with the palace, with the venerable chapel, and its painted episcopalities in glass, and the brave hall, &c. &c. Though it rained, I would crawl to Bonner's chair.—In short, my satisfaction would have been complete, but for wanting the presence of that Jesuitess, *the good old Papist*.²

To-morrow departs for London, to be delivered to the Bristol coach, at the White-horse-cellar, in Piccadilly, a parcel containing sixty-four Ghosts, one of which is printed on brown for your own eating. There is but one more such, so you may preserve it like a relic. I know these two are not so good as the white: but as rarities, a collector would give ten times more for them; and *uniquity* will make them valued more than the charming poetry.—I believe, if there was but one ugly woman in the world, she would occasion a longer war than Helen did.

You will find the bishop's letter in the parcel.—I did not breathe a hint of my having seen it, as I could not conjure up into my pale cheeks the blush I ought to exhibit on such flattery.

and exemplary prelate was born in Yorkshire, in 1731, and educated at Christ's College, Cambridge. In 1776, he was consecrated bishop of Chester; and, upon the death of bishop Lowth, in 1787, he was translated to the see of London. He died 10th June 1809. [Ed.]

² The signature to Bonner's Ghost. [Or.]

I pity you most sincerely for your almost drowned guest. Fortune seems to delight throwing poor *Louisas* in your way, that you may exercise your unbounded charity and benevolence. Adieu! pray write—I need not *write* to you to *pray*—but I wish, when your knees have what the common people call a worky day, you would employ your hands the whole time.

Yours most cordially.

P.S. I believe I have blundered, and that your knees would call a week-day a holiday.

TO MR. GOUGH.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 24, 1789.

I SHALL heartily lament with you, sir, the demolition of those beautiful chapels at Salisbury. I was scandalized long ago at the ruinous state in which they were indecently suffered to remain. It appears as strange, that, when a spirit of restoration and decoration has taken place, it should be mixed with barbarous innovation. As much as taste has improved, I do not believe that modern execution will equal our models. I am sorry that I can only regret, not prevent. I do not know the bishop of Salisbury even by sight, and certainly have no credit to obstruct any of his plans. Should I get sight of Mr. Wyatt, which it is not easy to do, I will remonstrate against the intended alteration, but probably without success, as I do not suppose he has authority enough to interpose effectually—still I will try. It is an old complaint with me, Sir, that when families are extinct, chapters take the freedom of removing ancient monuments, and even of selling over again the site of such tombs. A scandalous, nay, dishonest abuse, and very unbecoming clergymen! Is it creditable for divines to traffic for consecrated ground, and which the church had already sold? I do not wonder that magnificent monuments are out of fashion, when they are treated so disrespectfully. You, sir, alone have placed several out of the reach of such a kind of simoniacal abuse; for to buy into the church, or to sell the church's land twice over, breathes a similar kind of spirit. Perhaps, as the subscription indicates taste, if some of the subscribers could be persuaded to object to the removal of

the two beautiful chapels, as contrary to their view of beautifying, it might have a good effect; or, if some letter were published in the papers against the destruction, as barbarous, and the result of bad taste, it might divert the design. I zealously wish it were stopped—but I know none of the chapter or subscribers. I have the honour to be, with great regard, sir,

Your much obliged
and most obedient humble servant.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. * *, 1789.

I KNOW whence you wrote last, but not where you are now; you gave me no hint. I believe you fly lest I should pursue, and as if you were angry that I have forced you to sprout into laurels. Yet you say you are vain of it, and that you are no philosopher. Now, if you are vain, I am sure you *are* a philosopher; for it is a maxim of mine, and one of my own making, that there never was a philosopher that did not love *sweetmeats*.

You tell me too, that you like I should scold you—but since you have appeared as Bonner's ghost, I think I shall feel too much awe; for though (which I never expected would be in my power) I have made you stand *in a white sheet*, I doubt my respect is increased. I never did rate you for being too bad, but too good: and if, when you make up your week's account, you find but a fraction of vanity in the sum total, you will fall to repenting, and come forth on Monday as humble as * * *. Then, if I huff my heart out, you will only simper, and still wrap yourself up in your obstinate goodness. Well! take your own way; I give you up to all your abominable virtues, and will go answer the rest of your letter.

I congratulate you on the demolition of the Bastille—I mean as you do, of its functions. For the poor soul itself, I had no ill will to it: on the contrary, it was a curious sample of ancient castellar dungeons, which the good folks the founders took for palaces:—yet I always hated to drive by it, knowing the miseries it contained. Of itself it did not gobble up prisoners to glut its maw, but received them by command. The destruction of it was

silly, and agreeable to the ideas of a mob, who do not know stones and bars and bolts from a *lettre de cachet*.¹ If the country remains free, the Bastille would be as tame as a ducking-stool, now that there is no such a thing as a scold. If despotism recovers, the Bastille will rise from its ashes!—recover, I fear, it will. The *états* cannot remain a mob of kings, and will prefer a single one to a larger mob of kings and greater tyrants. The nobility, the clergy, and people of property will wait, till by address and money they can divide the people—or, whoever gets the larger or more victorious army into his hands, will be a Cromwell or a Monk. In short, a revolution procured by a national vertigo does not promise a crop of legislators. It is time that composes a good constitution: it formed ours. We were near losing it by the lax and unconditional restoration of Charles II. The revolution was temperate, and has lasted—and though it might have been improved, we know that with all its moderation it disgusted half the nation, who would have brought back the old sores.

I abominate the Inquisition as much as you do:—yet if the king of Spain receives no check like his cousin Louis, I fear he will not be disposed to relax any terrors. Every crowned head in Europe must ache at present; and the frantic and barbarous proceedings in France will not meliorate the stock of liberty, though for some time their majesties will be mighty tender of the rights of their subjects.

According to this hypothesis, I can administer some comfort to you about your poor negroes. I do not imagine that they will be emancipated at once—but their fate will be much alleviated, as the attempt will have alarmed their butchers enough to make them gentler, like the European monarchs, for fear of provoking the disinterested, who have no sugar plantations, to abolish the horrid traffic.

I do not understand the manœuvre of sugar, and, perhaps, am going to talk nonsense, as my idea may be impracticable—but I wish human wit, which is really very considerable in mechanics and merchantry, could devise some method of cultivating canes and making sugar without the manual labour of the human species. How many mills and inventions have there not been discovered to supply succedaneums to the work of the hands, and

¹ The “Lettres de Cachet” were, however, abolished in France on the 1st November of the year this letter was written. [Ed.]

which, before the discoveries, would have been treated as visions! It is true, manual labour has sometimes taken it very ill to be excused, and has destroyed such mills—but the poor negroes would not rise and insist upon being worked to death. Pray talk to some ardent genius, but do not name me—not merely because I may have talked like an idiot, but because my ignorance might, *ipso facto*, stamp the idea with ridicule. People, I know, do not love to be put out of their old ways: no farmer listens at first to new inventions in agriculture; and I don't doubt but bread was originally deemed a new-fangled vagary by those who had seen their fathers live very comfortably upon acorns. Nor is there any harm in starting new game to invention: many excellent discoveries have been made by men who were *à la chasse* of something very different. I am not quite sure that the arts of making gold and of living for ever have been yet found out:—yet to how many noble discoveries has the pursuit of those nostrums given birth! Poor chemistry, has she not had such glorious objects in view.

If you are sitting under a cowslip at your cottage, these reveries may amuse you for half an hour, at least make you smile; and for the ease of your conscience, which is always in a panic, they require no answer.

I will not ask you about the new History of Bristol,² because you are too good a citizen to say a word against your native place—but do pray cast your eye on the prints of the cathedral and castle, the *chef-d'œuvres* of Chatterton's ignorance, and of Mr. Barrett's too—and, on two letters pretended to have been sent to me, and which never were sent. If my incredulity had wavered, they would have fixed it. I wish the milk-woman would assert, that Boadicea's dairy-maid had invented Dutch tiles; it would be like Chatterton's origin of heraldry and painted glass, in those two letters.

I must, however, mention one word about myself. In the new fourth volume of the Biographia Britannica I am more candidly treated about that poor lad than usual: yet the writer still affirms that, according to my own account, my reply was too much in the common-place style of court-replies. Now my own words, and

² “The History and Antiquities of Bristol, by William Barrett.” Bristol, 1789. 4to. A work which Park has pronounced to be “a motley compound of real and suppositious history.” [Ed.]

the truth, as they stand in print in the very letter of mine which this author quotes, were, “*I wrote him a letter with as much kindness and tenderness as if I had been his guardian.*” Is this by my own account a court-reply?—Nor did I conceive, for I never was a courtier, that courtiers are wont to make *tender* replies to the poor—I am glad to hear they do.

I have kept this letter some days in my writing-box, till I could meet with a stray member of parliament—for it is not worth making you pay for: but when you talk to me I cannot help answering incontinently:—besides, can one take up a letter at a long distance, and heat one’s reply over again with the same interest that it occasioned at first? Adieu! I wish you may come to Hampton before I leave these purlieus!

Yours *More* and *More*.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 5, 1789.

You speak so unperemptorily of your motions, that I must direct to you at random: the most probable place where to hit you, I think, will be Goodwood; and I do address this thither, because I am impatient to thank you for your tale, which is very pretty and easy and genteel. It has made me make a reflection, and that reflection made six lines; which I send you, not as good, but as expressing my thoughts on your writing so well in various ways which you never practised when you was much younger.—Here they are:

The muse most wont to fire a youthful heart,
 To gild *your* setting sun reserved her art;
 To crown a life in virtuous labours pass’d,
 Bestow’d her numbers, and her wit at last;
 And when your strength and eloquence retire,
 Your voice in notes harmonious shall expire.

The *swan* was too common a thought to be directly specified—and, perhaps, even to be alluded to——no matter—such a trifle is below criticism.

I am still here, in no uncertainty, God knows, about poor lady

Dysart,¹ of whom there are not the smallest hopes. She grows weaker every day, and does actually still go out for the air, and may languish many days, though most probably will go off in a moment, as the water rises. She retains her senses perfectly, and as perfectly her unalterable calmness and patience, though fully sensible of her situation. At your return from Goodwood, I shall like to come to you, if you are unengaged, and ready to receive me. For the beauties of Park-place, I am too well acquainted with them, not, like all old persons about their contemporaries, to think it preserves them long after they are faded; and I am so *unwalking*, that prospects are more agreeable to me when framed and glazed, and I look at them through a window. It is yourselves I want to visit, not your verdure. Indeed, except a parenthesis of scarce all August, there has been no temptation to walk abroad; and the tempter himself would not have persuaded me, if I could, to have climbed that long-lost mountain whence he could show one even the antipodes. It rained incessantly all June and all July; and now again we have torrents every day.

Jerningham's brother, the chevalier, is arrived from Paris, and does not diminish the horrors one hears every day. They are now in the capital dreading the sixteen thousand deserters who hover about them. I conclude, that when in the character of banditti the whole disbanded army have plundered and destroyed what they can, they will congregate into separate armies under different leaders, who will hang out different principles, and the kingdom will be a theatre of civil wars; and, instead of liberty, the nation will get petty tyrants—perhaps petty kingdoms:—and when millions have suffered, or been sacrificed, the government will be no better than it was—all owing to the intemperance of the *états*, who might have obtained a good constitution, or at least one much meliorated, if they had set out with discretion and moderation. They have left, too, a sad lesson to despotic princes, who will quote this precedent of frantic *états* against assembling any more, and against all the examples of senates and parliaments that have preserved rational freedom.

Let me know when it will be convenient to you to receive me.

¹ Her ladyship, who was the daughter of sir Edward Walpole, and the first wife of Lionel, fourth earl of Dysart, died on the 5th September 1789, the very day on which this letter was written. [Ed.]

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 4, 1789.

I AM not surprised, my dear madam, that the notice of my illness should have stimulated your predominant quality, your sensibility. I cannot do less in return than relieve it immediately, by assuring you that I am in a manner recovered ; and should have gone out before this time, if my mind were as much at ease as my poor limbs. I have past five months most uncomfortably ; the two last most unhappily. In June and September I had two bad falls by my own lameness and weakness, and was much bruised, while I was witness to the danger, and then to the death of my invaluable niece, lady Dysart. She was angelic, and has left no children. The unexpected death of lord Waldegrave,² one of the most amiable of men, has not only deprived me of him, but has opened a dreadful scene of calamities ! He and my niece were the happiest and most domestic of couples.

Your kind inquiries after me have drawn these details from me, for which I make no excuse : good-nature never grudges its pity. I, who love to force your gravity to smile, am seriously better pleased to indulge your benevolence with a subject of esteem, which, though moving your compassion, will be accompanied by no compunction. I will now answer your letter.

Your plea, that not composition, but business, has occasioned your silence, is no satisfaction to *me*. In my present anxious solitude I have again read Bonner and Florio, and the Bas-bleu ; and do you think I am pleased to learn that you have not been writing ? Who is it says something like this line ?—

Hannah will *not* write, and Lactilla¹ *will*.

They who think her earl Goodwin will outgo Shakspeare, might be in the right if they specified in what way. I believe she may

² George, fourth earl of Waldegrave, born in 1751, married, in 1782, his cousin, lady Elizabeth Laura Waldegrave, daughter of James, the second earl. His death took place on the 22d October 1789. [Ed.]

¹ Mrs. Yearsley, the *milk* woman. Her "Earl Goodwin" was an historical play, which was performed at Bristol. [Ed.]

write worse than he sometimes did, though that is not easy ; but to excel him—oh ! I have not words adequate to my contempt for those who can suppose such a possibility !

I am sorry, very sorry for what you tell me of poor Barrett's fate. Though he did write worse than Shakespeare, it is a great pity he was told so, as it killed him ; and I rejoice that I did not publish a word in contradiction of the letters which he said Chatterton sent to me, as I was advised to do. I might have laughed at the poor man's folly, and then I should have been miserable to have added a grain to the poor man's mortification.

You rejoice *me*, not my vanity, by telling me my idea of a mechanic succedaneum to the labour of negroes is not visionary, but thought practicable. Oh ! how I wish I understood sugar and ploughs, and could marry them !—Alas ! I understand nothing useful. My head is as un-mechanic as it is un-arithmetic, un-geometric, un-metaphysic, un-commercial :—but will not some one of those superior heads to whom you have talked, on my indigested hint, reduce it to practicability ? How a feasible scheme would stun those who call humanity romantic, and show, from the books of the custom-house, that murder is a great improvement of the revenue ! Even the present situation of France is favourable. Could not Mr. Wilberforce obtain to have the enfranchisement of the negroes started there ? The Jews are claiming their natural rights there ; and blacks are certainly not so great defaulters as the Hebrews, though they, too, have undergone ample persecutions. Methinks, as lord George Gordon is in correspondence with the *états*, he has been a little remiss in not signing the petition of those of his new communion.

The *états* are detestable and despicable ; and, in fact, guilty of the outrages of the Parisian and provincial mobs. The mob 1,200—not legislators, but dissolvers of all laws, unchained the mastiffs that had been tied up, and were sure to worry all who fell in their way. To annihilate all laws, however bad, and to have none ready to replace them, was proclaiming anarchy. What should one think of a mad doctor, who should let loose a lunatic, suffer him to burn Bedlam, chop off the heads of the keepers, and then consult with some students in physic on the gentlest mode of treating delirium ? By a late vote I see that the 1,200 praters are reduced to 500—*vive la reine Billingsgate !* the Thalestris who has succeeded Louis quatorze. A committee

of those Amazons stopped the duke of Orleans, who, to use their style, I believe is not *a barrel the better herring*.

Your reflections on Vertot's passion for revolutions are admirable, and yet it is natural for an historian to like to describe times of action. Halcyon days do not furnish matter for talents; they are like the virtuous couple in a comedy, a little insipid.

Mr. Manly and lady Grace, Mellefont and Cynthia, do not interest one much. Indeed, in a tragedy where they are unhappy, they give the audience full satisfaction—and no envy.

The newspapers, no doubt, thought doctor * * * could not do better than to espouse you. He certainly would be very judicious, could he obtain your consent—but, alas! you would soon squabble about Socinianism, or some of those *isms*. To tell you the truth, I hate all those Constantinopolitan jargons, that set people together by the ears about pedantic terms. When you apply scholastic phrases as happily and genteelly as you do in your Bas-bleu, they are delightful; but don't muddle your charming simplicity with controversial distinctions, that will sour your sweet piety. Sects are the bane of charity, and have deluged the world with blood.

I do not mean, by what I am going to say, to extort another letter from you before I have the pleasure of seeing you at Hampton; but I really shall be much obliged to you for a single line soon, only to tell me if miss Williams is at Stoke with the duchess of Beaufort.

To a short note, cannot you add a short P.S. on the fate of earl Goodwin?

Lac mihi—novum non frigore desit.

Adieu, my amiable friend!

Yours most sincerely.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 20, 1790.

IT is very provoking that people must always be hanging or drowning themselves, or going mad, that you forsooth, mistress, may have the diversion of exercising your pity, and good-nature,

and charity, and intercession, and all that bead-roll of virtues that make you so troublesome and amiable, when you might be ten times more agreeable by writing things that would not cost one above half-a-crown at a time. You are an absolutely walking hospital, and travel about into lone and bye places with your doors open to house stray casualties! I wish at least that you would have some children yourself, that you might not be plaguing one for all the pretty brats that are starving and friendless. I suppose it was some such Goody two or three thousand years ago, that suggested the idea of an alma-mater, suckling the three hundred and sixty-five bantlings of the countess of Hainault.—Well, as your newly-adopted pensioners have *two* babes, I insist on your accepting *two* guineas for them instead of one at present (that is, when you shall be present).—If you cannot circumscribe your own charities, you shall not stint mine, madam, who can afford it much better, and who must be dunned for alms, and do not scramble over hedges and ditches in searching for opportunities, of flinging away my money on good works. I employ mine better at *auctions, and in buying pictures and baubles, and hoarding curiosities*, that in truth I can not keep long, but that will last *for ever* in my catalogue, and make me immortal!—Alas! will they cover a multitude of sins?—Adieu! I cannot jest after *that* sentence.

Yours most sincerely.

TO MR. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, May 17, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

I have the pleasure of telling you that lord Monson has acquainted me with his having brought his old portraits to town, and that you may see them at his house in Albermarle-street; but they are so much decayed, that he does not propose to having them repaired. If you should be coming to town, I will beg you to give me previous notice, and I will be ready to attend you to his lordship's house; but I must know it, overnight, that I may apprise lord Monson; and I should wish to hear from you in time, that I may not be at Strawberry-hill,

whither I go frequently, now the season is so fine. I am, with great regard,

Your much obliged humble servant.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, June 26, 1790.

I do not forget your lordship's commands, though I do recollect my own inability to divert you. Every year at my advanced time of life, would make more reasonable my plea of knowing nothing worth repeating, especially at this season. The general topic of elections is the last subject to which I could listen: there is not one about which I care a straw: and I believe your lordship quite as indifferent. I am not much more *au fait* of war or peace; I hope for the latter, nay, and expect it, because it is not yet war. Pride and anger do not deliberate to the middle of the campaign; and I believe even the great incendiaries are more intent on making a good bargain than on saving their honour. If they save lives, I care not who is the better politician: and, as I am not to be their judge, I do not inquire what false weights they fling into the scales. Two-thirds of France, who are not so humble as I, seem to think they can entirely new-model the world with metaphysical compasses, and hold that no injustice, no barbarity need to be counted in making the experiment. Such legislators are sublime empirics, and in their universal benevolence have very little individual sensibility.—In short, the result of my reflections on what has passed in Europe for these latter centuries is, that tyrants have no consciences, and reformers no feeling—and the world suffers both by the plague and by the cure.—What oceans of blood were Luther and Calvin the authors of being spilt! The late French government was detestable—yet I still doubt whether a civil war will not be the consequence of the revolution—and then what may be the upshot? Brabant¹

¹ On the death of the emperor, Joseph II., on the 20th February 1790, his successor, his brother Leopold, grand duke of Tuscany, recovered back the government of the Netherlands, by promising the inhabitants to govern them according to their ancient charters and constitution. [Ed.]

was grievously provoked—is it sure that it will be emancipated? For how short a time do people who set out on the most just principles, advert to their first springs of motion, and retain consistency? Nay, how long can promoters of revolutions be sure of maintaining their own ascendant? They are like projectors, who are commonly ruined, while others make fortunes on the foundation laid by the inventors.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night, July 1790.

It is certainly not from having any thing to tell you, that I reply so soon, but as the most agreeable thing I can do in my confinement. The gout came into my heel the night before last, perhaps from the deluge and damp. I increased it yesterday by limping about the house with a party I had to breakfast. To-day I am lying on the *settee*, unable to walk alone, or even to put on a slipper. However, as I am much easier this evening, I trust it will go off.

I do not love disputes, and shall not argue with you about Bruce; but if you like him, you shall not choose an author for me. It is the most absurd, obscure, and tiresome book I know. I shall admire if you have a clear conception about most of the persons and matters in his work—but, in fact, I do not believe you have. Pray, can you distinguish between his *cock* and *hen* Heghes, and between all Yasouses and Ozoros?—and do you firmly believe that an old man and his son were sent for and put to death, because the king had run into a thorn-bush, and was forced to leave his clothes behind him? Is it your faith, that one of their Abyssinian majesties pleaded not being able to contribute towards sending for a new Abuna, because he had spent all his money at Venice in looking-glasses? And do you really think that Peter Paez was a Jack-of-all-trades, and built palaces and convents without assistance, and furnished them with his own hands? You, who are a little apt to contest most assertions, must have strangely let out your credulity! I could put forty questions to you as wonderful, and, for my part, could as soon credit * * * *.

I am tired of railing at French barbarity and folly. They

are more puerile now serious, than when in the long paroxysm of gay levity. Legislators, a senate, to neglect laws, in order to annihilate coats of arms and liveries! to pull down a king, and set up an emperor! They are hastening to establish the tribunal of the prætorian guards; for the sovereignty, it seems, is not to be hereditary. One view of their fête of the 14th,¹ I suppose, is to draw money to Paris—and the consequence will be, that the deputies will return to the provinces drunk with independence and self-importance, and will commit fifty times more excesses, massacres, and devastations, than last year. George Selwyn says, that *monsieur*, the king's brother, is the only man of rank from whom they cannot take a title.

How frantically have the French acted, and how rationally the Americans!—But Franklin and Washington were great men. None have appeared yet in France; and Necker has only returned to make a wretched figure! he is become as insignificant as his king; his name is never mentioned, but now and then as disapproving something that is done. Why then does he stay? Does he wait to strike some great stroke, when every thing is demolished? His glory, which consisted in being minister, though a Protestant, is vanished by the destruction of popery; the honour of which, I suppose, he will scarce assume to himself.

I have vented my budget, and now good night! I feel almost as if I could walk up to bed.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, August 9, at night.

MR. N * * * has offered to be postman to you; *whereof*, though I have nothing, or as little as nothing to say, I thought *as how* it would look kinder to send nothing in writing than by word of mouth.

¹ On the 14th July 1790, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, was celebrated in the Champ de Mars, by the formation of a general confederation, for the purpose of administering the oath of fidelity to the new constitution, to the whole nation. When the king, for whom a throne was erected in the centre, and the whole National Assembly, surrounded by an immense concourse of people, having solemnly sworn to maintain the constitution, the oath was repeated by the assembled citizens. [Ed.]

Nothing the first. So the peace is made, and the stocks drank its health in a bumper; but when they waked the next morning, they found they had reckoned without their host, and that their majesties the king of big Britain and the king of little Spain have agreed to make peace some time or other, if they can agree upon it¹; and so the stocks drew in their horns: but having great trust in some time or other, they only fell two pegs lower. I, who never believed there would be war, keep my prophetic stocks up to par, and my consol—ation still higher; for when Spanish pride truckles, and English pride has had the honour of bullying, I dare to say we shall be content with the ostensible triumph, as Spain will be with some secret article that will leave her much where she was before.—Vide Falkland's island.

Nothing the second. Miss * * * *s match with lord * * * *. You asserted it so peremptorily, that, though I doubted it, I quoted you. Lo! it took its rise solely in poor old * * * *s dotage, that still harps on conjunctions copulative—but now disavows it, as they say, on a remonstrance from her daughter.

Nothing the third. Nothing will come of nothing, says king Lear, and

Your humble servant.

TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry-hill, Aug. 12, 1790.

I MUST not pretend any longer, my dear lord, that this region is void of news and diversions. Oh! we can innovate as well as neighbouring nations. If an earl S * * *,¹ though he cannot be a tribune, is ambitious of being a plebeian, he may without a law be as vulgar as heart can wish; and though we have not a national assembly to lay the axe to the root of nobility, the peerage have got a precedent for laying themselves in the kennel. Last night the earl of Barrymore was so humble

¹ Parliament having voted a million to fit out an armament on the occasion of our dispute with Spain respecting Nootka Sound, that country, being but little prepared for war, agreed to compensate the English merchants for the losses they had thereby sustained. [Ed.]

¹ Lord Stanhope took the chair at a public meeting, held on the 14th July 1790, at the Crown and Anchor, to celebrate the French Revolution. [Ed.]

as to perform a buffoon dance and act Scaramouch in a pantomime at Richmond for the benefit of Edwin, jun. the comedian : and I, like an old fool, but calling myself a philosopher that loves to study human nature in all its disguises, went to see the performance.

Mr. Gray thinks that some Milton or some Cromwell may be lost to the world under the garb of a ploughman. Others may suppose that some excellent jack pudding may lie hidden under red velvet and ermine. I cannot say that by the experiment of last night the latter hypothesis has been demonstrated, any more than the inverse proposition in France, where, though there seem to be many as bloody-minded rascals as Cromwell, I can discover none of his abilities. They have settled nothing like a constitution ; on the contrary, they seem to protract every thing but violence, as much as they can, in order to keep their *louis* a day, which is more than two-thirds of the assembly perhaps ever saw in a month.—I do not love legislators that pay themselves so amply ! They might have had as good a constitution as twenty-four millions of people could comport. As they have voted an army of an hundred and fifty thousand men, I know what their constitution will be, after passing through a civil war—in short, I detest them ; they have done irreparable injury to liberty, for no monarch will ever summon *états* again ; and all the real service that will result from their fury will be, that every king in Europe, for these twenty or perhaps thirty years to come, will be content with the prerogative he has, without venturing to augment it.

The empress of Russia has thrashed the king of Sweden ; and the king of Sweden has thrashed the empress of Russia. I am more glad that both are beaten than that either is victorious ; for I do not, like our newspapers, and such admirers, fall in love with heroes and heroines who make war without a glimpse of provocation. I do like *our* making peace, whether we had provocation or not.

I am forced to deal in European news, my dear lord, for I have no home-spun.

I don't think my whole inkhorn could invent another paragraph, and therefore I will take my leave with (your lordship knows) every kind wish for your health and happiness.

Your most devoted humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 27, 1791.

YOUR letter was most welcome, as yours always are, and I answer it immediately, though our post comes in so late that this will not go away till to-morrow.—Nay, I write, though I shall see you on Sunday, and have not a tittle to tell you. I lead so insipid a life, that, though I am content with it, it can furnish me with nothing but repetitions. I scarce ever stir from home in a morning, and most evenings go and play at loto with the French at Richmond, where I am heartily tired of hearing of nothing but their absurd countrymen, absurd, both democrates and aristocrates. Calonne sends them gross lies, that raise their hopes to the skies: and in two days, they hear of nothing but horrors and disappointments; and then, poor souls! they are in despair. I can say nothing to comfort them, but what I firmly believe, which is, that total anarchy must come on rapidly.—Nobody pays the taxes that are laid, and which, intended to produce eighty millions a month, do not bring in six. The new assembly will fall on the old, probably plunder the richest, and certainly disapprove of much they have done; for can eight hundred new ignorants approve of what has been done by twelve hundred almost as ignorant, and who were far from half agreeing?—And then their immortal constitution, (which, besides, is to be mightily mended nine years hence) will die before it has cut any of its teeth but its grinders. The exiles are enraged at their poor king for saving his own life by a forced acceptance: and yet I know no obligation he has to his noblesse, who all ran away to save their own lives; not a gentleman, but the two poor gendarmes at Versailles, having lost their lives in his defence. I suppose La Fayette, Barnave, the Lameths, &c. will run away, too, when the new tinkers and cobblers, of whom the present elect are and will be composed, proceed on the levelling system taught them by their predecessors, who, like other levellers, have taken good care of themselves. Good Dr. Priestley's friend, good monsieur Condorcet, has got a place in the treasury of 1,000*l.* a-year:—*ex uno disce omnes*:—And thus a set of rascals, who might, with temper and discretion, have obtained a very wholesome

constitution, witness Poland! have committed infinite mischief, infinite cruelty, infinite injustice, and left a shocking precedent against liberty, unless the Poles are as much admired and imitated as the French ought to be detested.

I do not believe the emperor will stir—yet. He, or his ministers, must see that it is the interest of Germany to let France destroy itself. His interference yet might unite and consolidate—at least check further confusion:—and though I rather think that twenty thousand men might march from one end of France to the other, as, though the officers often rallied, French soldiers never were stout; yet having no officers, no discipline, no subordination, little resistance might be expected. Yet the enthusiasm that has been spread might turn into courage. Still it were better for Cæsar to wait. Quarrels amongst themselves will dissipate enthusiasm; and if they have no foreign enemy, they will soon have spirit enough to turn their swords against one another, and what enthusiasm remains will soon be converted into the inveteracy of faction. This is speculation, not prophecy:—I do not pretend to guess what will happen:—I do think I know what will not: I mean, the system of experiments that they call a constitution, cannot last. Marvellous indeed would it be, if a set of military noble lads, pedantic academicians, curates of villages, and country advocates, could in two years, amidst the utmost confusion and altercation amongst themselves, dictated to or thwarted by obstinate clubs of various factions, have achieved what the wisdom of all ages and all nations has never been able to compose—a system of government that would set four-and-twenty millions of people free, and contain them within any bounds! This, too, without one great man amongst them.—If they had had, as Mirabeau seemed to promise to be—but as we know that he was, too—a consummate villain, there would soon have been an end of their vision of liberty. And so there will be still, unless, after a civil war, they split into small kingdoms or commonwealths.—A little nation may be free; for it can be upon its guard. Millions cannot be so; because, the greater number of men that are one people, the more vices, the more abuses there are, that will either require or furnish pretexts for restraints; and if vices are the mother of laws, the execution of laws is the father of power:—and of such parents one knows the progeny.

I did not think of writing such a rhapsody when I began—it shows how idle I am—I hope you will be so when you receive it. Adieu! I have tired my hand.

Yours ever.

P.S. The king of the French has written to the king of France and Great Britain, to notify his accession to the throne of Fontainebleau, where he is determined to reign as long as he is permitted, and obey all the laws that have been made to dethrone him.¹

N.B. The Cardinal de Lomenie, whom they call the cardinal de *l'Ignominie* with much reason, is the only gentleman elected for the new chaos, and he has declined.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Sept. 29, 1791.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I have been very sorry, but not at all angry, at not hearing from you so long. With all your friendly and benevolent heart, I know by experience how little you love writing to your friends—and I know why: you think you lose moments which you could employ in doing more substantial good; and that your letters only pamper our minds, but do not feed or clothe our bodies: if they did, you would coin as much paper as the French do in assignats. Do not imagine now that you have committed a wicked thing by writing to me at least; comfort yourself, that your conscience, not temptation, forced you to write; and be assured I am as grateful as if you had written from choice, not from duty, your constant spiritual director.

I have been out of order the whole summer, but not very ill for above a fortnight. I caught a painful rheumatism by going into a very crowded church in a rainy day, where all the windows were open, to hear our friend the bishop of London preach a charity sermon here at Twickenham. My gout would not resign

¹ On the 1st September, the king, attended by a deputation of sixty members, went to the National Assembly, and publicly ratified the acceptance which he had given on the preceding day to the new constitution. [Ed.]

to a new incumbent, but came, too; and both together have so lamed my right hand, though I am now using it, that I cannot yet extend it entirely, nor lift it to the top of my head. However, I am free from pain; and as Providence, though it supplied us originally with so many bounties, took care we might shift with succedaneums on the loss of several of them, I am content with what remains of my stock; and since all my fingers are not useless, and that I have not six hairs left, I am not much grieved at not being able to comb my head. Nay, should not a shadow as I have ever been, be thankful, that at the eve of seventy-five I am not yet passed away?

I am so little out of charity with the bishop for having been the innocent cause of the death of my shoulder, that I am heartily concerned for him and her on Mrs. Porteus's accident.¹ It may have marbled her complexion, but I am persuaded has not altered her lively, amiable, good-humoured countenance. As I know not where to direct to them, and as you cannot suppose it a sin for a sheep to write to its pastor on a week-day, I wish you would mark the interest I take in their accident and escape from worse mischief.

I thank you most cordially for your inquiry about *my* wives.² I am in the utmost perplexity of mind about them; torn between hopes and fears. I believe them set out from Florence on their return since yesterday se'nnight, and consequently feel all the joy and impatience of expecting them in five or six weeks:—but then, besides fears of roads, bad inns, accidents, heats and colds, and the sea to cross in November at last; all my satisfaction is dashed by the uncertainty whether they come through Germany or France. I have advised, begged, implored, that it may not be through those Iroquois, Lestryons, Anthropophagi, the Franks; and then, hearing passports were abolished, and the roads more secure, I half consented, as they wished it, and the road is much shorter; and then I repented, and have contradicted myself again—And now I know not which route they will take! nor shall enjoy any comfort from the thoughts of their return, till they are returned safe.

'Tis well I am doubly guaranteed, or who knows, as I am as old almost as both her husbands together, but Mrs. B****

¹ An overturn in a carriage. [Or.]

² The two miss Berrys, whom he thus called. [Or.]

might have cast a longing eye towards me? How I laughed at hearing of her throwing a second muckender to a Methusalem! a fat red-faced veteran, with a portly hillock of flesh. I conclude all her grandfathers are dead; or, as there is no prohibition in the table of consanguinity against male ancestors, she would certainly have stepped back towards the deluge, and ransacked her pedigrees on both sides for some kinsman of the patriarchs. I could titter à *plusieurs reprises*; but I am too old to be improper, and you are too modest to be *impropered* to, and so I will drop the subject at the herald's office.

I am happy at and honour Miss B * * * 's resolution in casting away golden, or rather gilt chains: others out of vanity would have worn them till they had eaten into the bone. On that charming young woman's chapter I agree with you perfectly—not a jot on *Deborah* * * * *, whom you admire: I have neither read her verses nor will. As I have not your aspen conscience, I cannot forgive the heart of a woman that is party per pale blood and tenderness, that curses our clergy and feels for negroes. Can I forget the 14th of July, when they all contributed their faggot to the fires that her presby-tyrants (as lord Melcombe called them) tried to light in every Smithfield in the island, and which as Price³ and Priestley applauded in France, it would be folly to suppose they did not only wish but meant to kindle here? Were they ignorant of the atrocious barbarities, injustice, and violation of oaths committed in France? Did Priestley not know that the clergy there had no option left but between starving and perjury? And what does he think of the poor man executed at Birmingham, who declared at his death he had been provoked by the infamous hand-bill?—I know not who wrote it. —No, my good friend: *Deborah* may cant rhymes of compassion, but she is a hypocrite; and you shall not make me read her, nor with all your sympathy and candour can you esteem her. *Your* compassion for the poor blacks is genuine, sincere from your soul, most amiable: hers, a measure of faction: her party supported the abolition, and regretted the disappointment as a

³ Dr. Richard Price, an eminent dissenting minister, and political writer, and one of the warmest advocates for the French Revolution which this country produced. Pitt is said to have been greatly indebted in his financial arrangements to Price's best known work: "Observations on Reversionary Payments," which has gone through many editions. [Ed.]

blow to the good cause. I know this.—Do not let your piety lead you into the weakness of respecting the bad, only because they hoist the flag of religion, while they carry a stiletto in the flag-staff. Did not they, previous to the 14th July, endeavour to corrupt the guards? What would have ensued, had they succeeded, you must tremble to think?

You tell me nothing of your own health—may I flatter myself it is good? I wish I knew so authentically! and I wish I could guess when I should see you, without your being staked to the fogs of the Thames at Christmas—I cannot desire that. Adieu, my very valuable friend! I am, though unworthy,
Yours most cordially.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 1, 1792.

MY MUCH-ESTEEMED FRIEND,

I have not so long delayed answering your letter from the pitiful revenge of recollecting how long your pen is fetching breath before it replies to mine—Oh! no—You know I love to *heap coals of kindness* on your head, and to draw you into little sins, that you may forgive yourself, by knowing your time was employed on big virtues. On the contrary, you would be revenged; for here have you, according to *your* notions, inveigled me into the fracture of a commandment; for I am writing to you on a *Sunday*, being the first moment of leisure that I have had since I received your letter. It does not indeed clash with my religious ideas, as I hold paying one's debts as good a deed as praying and reading sermons for a whole day in every week, when it is impossible to fix the attention to one course of thinking for so many hours for fifty-two days in every year.—Thus you see I can preach, too—But seriously—and indeed I am little disposed to cheerfulness now—I am overwhelmed with troubles, and with business—and business that I do not understand.—Law, and the management of a ruined estate, are subjects ill-suited to a head that never studied any thing that in worldly language is called useful. The tranquillity of my remnant of life will be lost, or so perpetually interrupted,

that I expect little comfort—not that I am already intending to grow rich, but the moment one is supposed so, there are so many alert to turn one to their own account, that I have more letters to write to satisfy—or rather to dissatisfy them, than about my own affairs, though the latter are all confusion. I have such missives on agriculture, pretensions to livings, offers of taking care of my game as I am incapable of it, self-recommendations of making my robes, and round hints of taking out my writ, that at least I may name a proxy, and give my dormant conscience to somebody or other! I trust you think better of my heart and understanding than to suppose that I have listened to any one of these new *friends*. Yet though I have negatived all, I have been forced to answer some of them before you; and that will convince you how cruelly ill I have passed my time lately, besides having been made ill with vexation and fatigue—But I am tolerably well again.

For the other empty metamorphosis that has happened to the outward man,² you do me justice in concluding that it can do nothing but tease me—it is being called names in one's old age. I had rather be my lord mayor, for then I should keep the nickname but a year, and mine I may retain a little longer—not that at seventy-five I reckon on becoming my lord Methusalem.

Vainer, however, I believe I am already become; for I have wasted almost two pages about myself, and said not a tittle about your health, which I most cordially rejoice to hear you are recovering, and as fervently hope you will entirely recover. I have the highest opinion of the element of water as a constant beverage, having so deep a conviction of the goodness and wisdom of Providence, that I am persuaded that when it indulged us in such a luxurious variety of eatables, and gave us but one drinkable, it intended that our sole liquid should be both wholesome and corrective.—Your system I know is different—You hold that mutton and water were the only cock and hen that were designed for our nourishment—but I am apt to doubt whether draughts of water for six weeks are capable of restoring health, though some are strongly impregnated with mineral and other particles—Yet you have staggered me: the Bath water,

² His accession to his title. This is the last letter but one signed Horace Walpole, and that one follows it, being without date or other internal evidence of the time it was written. [Or.]

by your account, is, like electricity, compounded of contradictory qualities ; the one attracts and repels ; the other turns a shilling yellow, and whitens your jaundice. I shall hope to see you (when is that to be?) without alloy.

I must finish, wishing you three hundred and thirteen days of happiness for the new year that is arrived this morning : the fifty-two that you hold in commendam, I have no doubt will be rewarded as such good intentions deserve.

Adieu, my *too* good friend ! My direction shall talk superciliously to the postman ;² but do let me continue unchangeably
Your faithful and sincere, &c.

TO LADY * * * .¹

YOUR ladyship's illustrious exploits are the constant theme of my meditations. Your expeditions are so rapid, and to such distant regions, that I cannot help thinking you are possessed of the giant's boots that stepped seven leagues at a stride, as we are assured by that accurate historian Mother Goose. You are, I know, madam, an excellent walker, yet methinks seven leagues at once are a prodigious straddle for a fair lady. But whatever is your manner of travelling, few heroines ancient or modern can be compared to you for length of journeys. Thalestris, queen of the Amazons, and M. M. or N. N. queen of Sheba, went each of them the Lord knows how far to meet Alexander the great and Solomon the wise ; the one to beg the favour of having a daughter (I suppose) and heiress by him ; and the other, says scandal, to grant a like favour to the Hebrew monarch. Your ladyship, who has more real Amazonian principles, never makes visits but to empresses, queens, and princesses ; and your country is enriched with the maxims of wisdom and virtue which you collect in your travels. For such great ends did Herodotus, Pythagoras, and other sages, make voyages to Egypt, and every distant kingdom ; and it is amazing how much their own countries were benefited by what those philosophers learned in their peregrinations. Were it not that

² He means franking his letter by his newly-acquired title of earl of Orford. [Or.]

¹ To lady Craven. [Ed.]

your ladyship is actuated by such public spirit, I could put you in mind, madam, of an old story that might save you a great deal of fatigue and danger—and now I think of it, as I have nothing better to fill my letter with, I will relate it to you.

Pyrrhus, the martial and *magnanimous* king of Epirus (as my lord Lyttelton would call him), being, as I have heard or seen Goodman Plutarch say, intent on his preparations for invading Italy, Cineas, one of the grooms of his bed-chamber, took the liberty of asking his majesty what benefit he expected to reap if he should be successful in conquering the Romans?—Jesus! said the king, peevishly; why, the question answers itself. When we have overcome the Romans, no province, no town, whether Greek or Barbarian, will be able to resist us: we shall at once be masters of all Italy. Cineas, after a short pause replied, And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?—Do next? answered Pyrrhus; why, seize Sicily. Very likely, quoth Cineas; but will that put an end to the war?—The gods forbid! cried his majesty: when Sicily is reduced, Libya and Carthage will be within our reach. And then, without giving Cineas time to put in a word, the heroic prince ran over Africa, Greece, Asia, Persia, and every other country he had ever heard of upon the face of God's earth; not one of which he intended should escape his victorious sword. At last, when he was at the end of his geography, and a little out of breath, Cineas watched his opportunity, and said quietly, Well, sire, and when we have conquered all the world, what are we to do then?—Why, then, said his majesty, extremely satisfied with his own prowess, we will live at our ease; we will spend whole days in banqueting and carousing, and will think of nothing but our pleasures.

Now, madam, for the application. Had I had the honour a few years ago of being your confidential abigail, when you meditated a visit to princess Esterhazi, I would have ventured to ask your ladyship of what advantage her acquaintance would be to you? Probably you would have told me, that she would introduce you to several electresses and margravines, whose courts you would visit. That having conquered all their hearts, as I am persuaded you would, your next jaunt should be to Hesse; from whence it would be but a trip to Aix, where madame de Rochouart lives. Soaring from thence you would repair to the

imperial court at Vienna, where resides the most august, most virtuous, and most plump of empresses and queens—no, I mistake—I should only have said, of empresses; for her majesty of Denmark, God bless her! is reported to be full as virtuous, and three stone heavier. Shall not you call at Copenhagen, madam? If you do, you are next door to the Czarina, who is the quintessence of friendship, as the princess Daskioff says, whom, next to the late Czar, her Muscovite majesty loves above all the world. Asia, I suppose, would not enter into your ladyship's system of conquest; for, though it contains a sight of queens and sultanas, the poor ladies are locked up in abominable places, into which I am sure your ladyship's amity would never carry you—I think they call them seraglios. Africa has nothing but empresses stark-naked; and of complexions directly the reverse of your alabaster. They do not reign in their own right; and what is worse, the emperors of those barbarous regions wear no more robes than the sovereigns of their hearts.—And what are princes and princesses without velvet and ermine? As I am not a jot a better geographer than king Pyrrhus, I can at present recollect but one lady more who reigns alone, and that is her majesty of Otaheite, lately discovered by Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander; and for whom your ladyship's compassionate breast must feel the tenderest emotions, she having been cruelly deprived of her faithful minister and lover Tobiu, since dead at Batavia.

Well, madam, after you should have given me the plan of your intended ex̄peditions, and not left a queen regent on the face of the globe unvisited, I would ask what we were to do next?—Why then, dear Abigail, you would have said, we will retire to * * * *, we will plant shrubs all the morning, read Anderson's Royal Genealogies all the evening; and once or twice a week I will go to Gunnersbury and drink a bottle with princess Amelia.—Alas, dear lady! and cannot you do all that without skuttling from one end of the world to the other?—This was the upshot of all Cineas's inquisitiveness: and this is the pith of this tedious letter from, madam,

Your ladyship's most faithful Aulic
Counsellor and humble admirer.

TO MR. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, March 15, 1792.

LORD ORFORD is confined by the gout in his arm : but has examined the MS. Catalogue, and cannot possibly satisfy Mr. Gough whether it is the original, or a copy, from which Vertue made his extracts. As well as lord Orford recollects, Vertue extracted his list from a MS. in the possession of Mr. Bryan Fairfax ; but Vertue took out nothing but the pictures, and none of the plate, furniture, &c. And though lord Orford observes that some of the same pictures are mentioned as at different palaces, yet there seemed to be several more than are in the Catalogue of the Royal Collection published by Bathow. And this is all the information lord Orford can give Mr. Gough.

TO THOMAS BARRETT, Esq.

Berkeley-square, May 14, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

Though my poor fingers do not yet write easily, I cannot help inquiring if Mabuese¹ is arrived safely at Lee, and fits his destined stall in the library.

My amendment is far slower, *comme de raison*, than ever, and my weakness much greater. Another fit, I doubt, will confine me to my chair, if it does not do more—it is not worth haggling about that.

Dr. Darwin has appeared, superior in some respects to the former part. The Triumph of Flora, beginning at the 59th line, is most beautifully and enchantingly imagined, and the twelve verses that by miracle describe and comprehend the creation of the universe out of chaos, are in my opinion the most sub-

¹ A capital picture by that master, then lately purchased by Mr. Barrett. [Or.] He was a native of Hainault, and the friend of Lucas of Leyden. He visited this country in the reign of Henry VII., and painted the portraits of many of the English nobility; but his most celebrated work executed in England, was his picture of the Marriage of Henry VII. with Elizabeth of York, which was in Walpole's possession. [Ed.]

lime passage, in any author, or in any of the few languages with which I am acquainted. There are a thousand other verses most charming, or indeed all are so crowded with most poetic imagery, gorgeous epithets, and style—and yet these four cantos do not please me equally with the Loves of the Plants. This seems to me almost as much a rhapsody of unconnected parts; and is so deep, that I cannot read six lines together and know what they are about, till I have studied them in the long notes, and then perhaps do not comprehend them—But all this is my fault, not Mr. Darwin's—Is he to blame, that I am no natural philosopher, no chemist, no metaphysician?

One misfortune will attend this glorious work—it will be little read, but by those who have no taste for poetry, and who will be weighing and criticising his positions, without feeling the imagination, harmony, and expression of the versification.

Is not it extraordinary, dear sir, that two of our very best poets, Garth and Darwin, should have been physicians?—I believe they have left all the lawyers wrangling at the turnpike of Parnassus. Adieu, dear sir!

Yours most cordially.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, August 31, 1792.

YOUR long letter and my short one crossed one another upon the road. I knew it was in your debt; but I had nothing to say but what you know better than I; for you read all the French papers, and I read none, as they have long put me out of all patience: and besides, I hear so much of their horrific proceedings, that they quite disturb me, and have given me what I call *the French disease*; that is, a barbarity that I abhor, for I cannot help wishing destruction to thousands of human creatures whom I never saw.—But when men have worked themselves up into tigers and hyænas, and labour to communicate their appetite for blood, what signifies whether they walk on two legs or four, or whether they dwell in cities, or in forests and dens?—Nay, the latter are the more harmless wild beasts; for they only cranch a poor traveller now and then, and when they are fa-

mished with hunger ;—the others, though they have dined, cut the throats of some hundreds of poor Swiss for an afternoon's luncheon. Oh! the execrable nation!

I cannot tell you any new particulars, for mesdames de Cambis and d'Hennin,¹ my chief informers, are gone to Goodwood to the poor duchesse de Biron, of whose recovery I am impatient to hear—and so I am of the cause of her very precipitate flight and panic. She must, I think, have had strong motives; for two years ago I feared she was much too courageous, and displayed her intrepidity too publicly. If I did not always condemn the calling *bad people mad people*, I should say all Paris is gone distracted: they furnish provocation to every species of retaliation, by publishing rewards for assassination of kings and generals, and cannot rest without incensing all Europe against them.

The duchess of York gave a great entertainment at Oatlands on her duke's birth-day, sent to his tradesmen in town to come to it, and allowed two guineas a-piece to each for their carriage—gave them a dance, and opened the ball herself with the prince of Wales. A company of strollers came to Weybridge to act in a barn: she was solicited to go to it, and did out of charity, and carried all her servants. Next day a methodist teacher came to preach a charity sermon in the same theatre, and she consented to hear it on the same motive—but her servants desired to be excused, on not understanding English.—“Oh!” said the duchess, “but you went to the comedy, which you understood less, and you shall go to the sermon;” to which she gave handsomely, and for them. I like this.

Tack this to my other fragment, and then, I trust, I shall not be a defaulter in correspondence. I own I am become an indolent poor creature:—but is that strange? With seventy-five years over my head, or on the point of being so; with a chalk-stone in every finger; with feet so limping, that I have been but twice this whole summer round my own small garden, and so much weaker than I was, can I be very comfortable, but when sitting quiet and doing nothing? All my strength consists in my sleep, which is as vigorous as at twenty:—but with regard to letter-writing, I have so many to write on business which I do

¹ La princesse d'Hennin was the daughter of madame de Monconseil. [Ed.]

not understand, since the unfortunate death of my nephew,² that, though I make them as brief as possible, half-a-dozen short ones tire me as much as a long one to an old friend; and as the busy ones must be executed, I trespass on the others, and remit them to another day. Norfolk has come very *mal-à-propos* into the end of my life, and certainly never entered into my views and plans; and I, who could never learn the multiplication table, was not intended to transact leases, direct repairs of farm-houses, settle fines for church lands, negotiate for lowering interest on mortgages, &c. In short, as I was told formerly, though I know several things, I never understood any thing useful. *A-propos*, the letter of which lady C * * * * told you is not at all worth your seeing. It was an angry one to a parson who oppresses my tenants, and will go to law with them about tythes. She came in as I was writing it; and as I took up the character of parson myself, and preached to him as pastor of a flock, which it did not become him to lead into the paths of law, instead of those of peace, I thought it would divert, and showed it to her.

Adieu! I have been writing to you till midnight, and my poor fingers ache.

Yours ever.

TO MR. GOUGH.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 14, 1792.

SIR,

I have a portrait of Law, and should not object to letting a copy of it be taken; but I doubt that could not be done, being in crayons, by Rosalba, under a glass; and any shaking being prejudicial to crayons, I fixed the picture in one of the niches of my gallery under a net work of carving, whence it cannot be removed without pulling the niche to pieces. The picture, too, being placed over the famous statue of the eagle, there is no getting near to it, and I certainly could not venture to let a ladder be set against the statue. Indeed, as there are extant at least three prints of Law, there does not seem to be another wanting. I am sorry, sir, I cannot give you a more satisfactory answer

² George, third earl of Orford, who died 5th December 1791, and whom he had succeeded, as earl of Orford. [Ed.]

about lady Wallingford. I have met her at two or three places, but I did not visit her, nor have the least knowledge of her husband's family, nor to whom she left any thing she had ; nor can I direct you at all where to inquire. I did not even know that there is an earl of Banbury living.

Your account, sir, of the Cornwall monument is very curious. I never met with the painter's name, and thank you for it. I am, with great regard, sir,

Your obedient humble servant.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.¹

THE purport of Dr. Robertson's visit was to inquire where he could find materials for the reigns of king William and queen Anne, which he means to write as a supplement to David Hume. I had heard of his purpose, but did not own I knew it, that my discouragement might seem the more natural. I do not care a straw what he writes about the church's wet-nurse, goody Anne ; but no Scot is worthy of being the historian of William, but Dr. Watson.²

When he had told me his object, I said, " Write the reign of king William, Dr. Robertson ! That is a great task ! I look on him as the greatest man of modern times since his ancestor William prince of Orange." I soon found the doctor had little idea of him, or had taken upon trust the pitiful partialities of Dalrymple and Macpherson. I said, " Sir, I do not doubt but king William came over with a view to the crown. Nor was he called upon by patriotism, for he was not an Englishman, to assert our liberties. No ; his patriotism was of a higher rank. He aimed not at the crown of England for ambition, but to employ its forces and wealth against Louis XIV. for the common cause of the liberties of Europe. The Whigs did not un-

¹ This letter, which has hitherto been placed at the end of those written in 1796, cannot reasonably be supposed to be of later date than 1792, as principal Robertson, the learned historian of " Charles the Fifth," &c., died on the 11th June 1793. [Ed.]

² The rev. Robert Watson, LL.D., author of the Histories of the Reigns of Philip II. and Philip III. of Spain. [Ed.]

derstand the extent of his views, and the Tories betrayed him. He has been thought not to have understood us; but the truth was, he took either party as it was predominant, that he might sway the parliament to support his general plan." The doctor, suspecting that I doubted his principles being enlarged enough to do justice to so great a character, told me he himself had been born and bred a Whig, though he owned he was *now* a moderate one—I believe, a very moderate one. I said Macpherson had done great injustice to another hero, the duke of Marlborough, whom he accuses of betraying the design on Brest to Louis XIV. The truth was, as I heard often in my youth from my father, my uncle, and old persons who had lived in those times, that the duke trusted the duchess with the secret, and she her sister, the popish duchess of Tyrconnel, who was as poor and as bigoted as a church mouse. A corroboration of this was the wise and sententious answer of king William to the duke, whom he taxed with betraying the secret. "Upon my honour, sir," said the duke, "I told it to nobody but my wife." "I did not tell it to mine," said the king.

I added, that Macpherson's and Dalrymple's invidious scandals really serve but to heighten the amazing greatness of the king's genius; for, if they say true, he maintained the crown on his head, though the nobility, the church-men, the country gentlemen, the people were against him; and though almost all his own ministers betrayed him—"But," said I, "nothing is so silly as to suppose that the duke of Marlborough and lord Godolphin ever meant seriously to restore king James. Both had offended him too much to expect forgiveness, especially from so remorseless a nature. Yet a re-revolution was so probable, that it is no wonder they kept up a correspondence with him, at least to break their fall if he returned. But as they never did effectuate the least service in his favour, when they had the fullest power, nothing can be inferred but king James's folly in continuing to lean on them. To imagine they meant to sacrifice his weak daughter, whom they governed absolutely, to a man who was sure of being governed by others, one must have as little sense as James himself had.

The precise truth I take to have been this. Marlborough and Godolphin both knew the meanness and credulity of James's character. They knew that he must be ever dealing for par-

tisans; and they might be sure, that if he could hope for support from the general and the lord treasurer, he must be less solicitous for more impotent supporters. "Is it impossible," said I to the doctor, "but they might correspond with the king even by Anne's own consent? Do not be surprised, sir," said I "such things have happened. My own father often received letters from the Pretender, which he always carried to George II. and had them indorsed by his majesty. I myself have seen them countersigned by the king's own hand."

In short, I endeavoured to impress him with proper ideas of his subject, and painted to him the difficulties, and want of materials. But the booksellers will out-argue me, and the doctor will forget his education—*Panem et Circenses*, if you will allow me to use the latter for those that are captivated by favour in the *circle*, will decide his writing and give the colour. I once wished he should write the History of King William; but his Charles V. and his America have opened my eyes, and the times have shut his. Adieu!

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

I HAVE been reading a new French translation of the elder Pliny, of whom I never read but scraps before; because, in the poetical manner in which we learn Latin at Eton, we never become acquainted with the names of the commonest things, too undignified to be admitted into verse; and, therefore, I never had patience to search in a dictionary for the meaning of every substantive. I find I shall not have a great deal less trouble with the translation, as I am not more familiar with their common *drogues* than with the Latin. However, the beginning goes off very glibly, as I am not yet arrived below the planets. But do you know that this study, of which I have never thought since I learnt astronomy at Cambridge, has furnished me with some very entertaining ideas! I have long been weary of the common jargon of poetry. You bards have exhausted all the nature we are acquainted with; you have treated us with the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and the ocean, mountains and valleys, &c., &c., under every possible aspect. In short, I have

longed for some American poetry, in which I might find new appearances of nature, and consequently of art. But my present excursion into the sky has afforded me more entertaining prospects, and newer phenomena. If I was as good a poet as you are, I would immediately compose an idyl, or an elegy, the scene of which should be laid in Saturn or Jupiter; and then, instead of a niggardly soliloquy by the light of a single moon, I would describe a night illuminated by four or five moons at least, and they should be all in a perpendicular or horizontal line, according as Celia's eyes (who probably in that country has at least two pair) are disposed in longitude or latitude. You must allow that this system would diversify poetry amazingly—And then Saturn's belt! which the translator says in his notes, is not round the planet's waist, like the shingles, but is a globe of crystal that encloses the whole orb, as you may have seen an enamelled watch in a case of glass. If you do not perceive what infinitely pretty things may be said, either in poetry or romance, on a brittle heaven of crystal, and what furbelowed rainbows they must have in that country, you are neither the Ovid nor natural philosopher I take you for. Pray send me an eclogue directly upon this plan—and I give you leave to adopt my idea of Saturnian Celias having their every thing quadrupled—which would form a much more entertaining rhapsody than Swift's thought of magnifying or diminishing the species in his Gulliver. How much more execution a fine woman would do with two pair of *piercers*! or four! and how much longer the honey-moon would last, if both the sexes have (as no doubt they have) four times the passions, and four times the means of gratifying them! —I have opened new worlds to you—You must be four times the poet you are, and then you will be above Milton, and equal to Shakspeare, the only two mortals I am acquainted with who ventured beyond the visible diurnal sphere, and preserved their intellects. Dryden himself would have talked nonsense, and, I fear * *, on my plan; but you are too good a divine, I am sure, to treat my quadruple love but platonically. In Saturn, notwithstanding their glass-case, they are supposed to be very cold; but platonic love of itself produces frigid conceits enough, and you need not augment the dose—But I will not dictate. The subject is new; and you, who have so much imagination, will shoot far beyond me. Fontenelle would have made some-

thing of the idea, even in prose; but Algarotti would dishearten any body from attempting to meddle with the system of the universe a second time in genteel dialogue. Good night! I am going to bed.—Mercy on me! if I should dream of Celia with four times the usual attractions!

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 9, 1793.

MY HOLY HANNAH,

With your innate and usual goodness and sense, you have done me justice by guessing exactly at the cause of my long silence. You have been apt to tell me that my letters diverted you—How then could I write, when it was impossible but to attrist you! when I could speak of nothing but unparalleled horrors! and but awaken your sensibility, if it slumbered for a moment! What mind could forget the 10th of August, and the second of September—and that the black and bloody year 1792 has plunged its murderous dagger still deeper, and already made 1793 still more detestably memorable! though its victim has at last been rewarded for four years of torture by forcing from him every kind of proof of the most perfect character that ever sat on a throne. Were these, alas! themes for letters? Nay, am I not sure that *you* have been still more shocked by a crime that passes even the guilt of shedding the blood of poor Louis¹—to hear of atheism avowed, and the avowal tolerated by monsters calling themselves a National Assembly!—But I have no words that can reach the criminality of such *inferno-human* beings—but must compose a term that aims at conveying my idea of them—For the future it will be sufficient to call them *the French*—I hope no other nation will ever deserve to be confounded with them!

Indeed, my dear friend, I have another reason for wishing to burn my pen entirely: all my ideas are confounded and overturned—I do not know whether all I ever learned in the seventy first years of my seventy-five was not wrong and false: common

¹ Louis XVI. was guillotined on the 21st January 1793, and France was the same day declared a republic. [Ed.]

sense, reasoning, calculation, conjecture from analogy and from history of past events, all, all have been baffled ; nor am I sure that what used to be thought the result of experience and wisdom, was not a mass of mistakes—Have I not found, do I not find, that the invention of establishing metals as the *signs* of property was an useless discovery, or at least only useful till the art of making paper was found out? Nay, the latter is preferable to gold and silver. If the ores were adulterated and cried down, nobody would take them in exchange. Depreciate paper as much as you will, and it will still serve all the purposes of barter. Tradesmen still keep shops, stock them with goods, and deliver their commodities for those coined rags—Poor Reason, where art thou?

To show you that memory and argument are of no value, at least with me, I thought a year or two that this paper-mint would soon blow up, because I remembered that when Mr. Charles Fox and one or two more youths of brilliant genius first came to light, and into vast debts at play, they imparted to the world an important secret which they had discovered—It was, that nobody needed to want money, if they would pay enough for it. Accordingly, they borrowed of Jews at vast usury: but as they had made but an incomplete calculation, the interest so soon exceeded the principal, that the system did not maintain its ground for above two or three years. Faro has proved a more substantial speculation.—But I miscarried in applying my remembrance to the assignats, which still maintain their ground against that long-decried, but as long-adored corruptor of virtue, gold—Alack! I do not hear that virtue has flourished more for the destruction of its old enemy!

Shall I add another truth? I have been so disgusted and fatigued by hearing of nothing but French massacres, &c., and found it so impossible to shift conversation to any other topic, that before I had been a month in town, I wished Miss G * * * * would revive, that people might have at least one other subject to interest the ears and tongues of the public.—But no wonder universal attention is engrossed by the present portentous scene! It seems to draw to a question, whether Europe or France is to be depopulated; whether civilization can be recovered, or the republic of Chaos can be supported by assassination. We have heard of the golden, silver, and iron ages—the brazen one ex-

isted, while the French were only predominantly insolent.—What the present age will be denominated, I cannot guess. Though the paper age would be characteristic, it is not emphatic enough, nor specifies the enormous sins of the fiends that are the agents. I think it may be styled the diabolic age—The duke of Orleans has dethroned Satan, who since his fall has never instigated such crimes as Orleans has perpetrated.

Let me soften my tone a little, and harmonise your poor mind with sweeter accents. In this deluge of triumphant enormities, what traits of the sublime and beautiful may be gleaned! Did you hear of madame Elizabeth, the king's sister? a saint like yourself. She doted on her brother, for she certainly knew his soul. In the tumult in July, hearing the populace and the *poissardes* had broken into the palace, she flew to the king, and by embracing him tried to shield his person. The populace took her for the queen, cried out, “*Voilà cette chienne, cette Autrichienne!*” and were proceeding to violence. Somebody, to save her, screamed, “*Ce n'est pas la reine, c'est—*” The princess said, “*Ah! mon Dieu! ne les détrompez pas.*”—If that was not the most sublime instance of perfect innocence ready prepared for death, I know not where to find one.

Sublime, indeed, too, was the sentence of good father Edgeworth, the king's confessor, who thinking his royal penitent a little dismayed just before the fatal stroke, cried out “*Montez, digne fils de St. Louis! Le ciel vous est ouvert.*”—The holy martyr's countenance brightened up, and he submitted at once. Such victims, such confessors as those, and monsieur de Malesherbes, repair some of the breaches in human nature made by Orleans, Condorcet, Santerre, and a legion of evil spirits.

The tide of horrors has hurried me much too far, before I have vented a note of my most sincere concern for your bad account of your health. I feel for it heartily, and wish your frame were as sound as your soul and understanding. What can I recommend? I am no physician but for my own flimsy texture, which, by studying, and by contradicting all advice, I have drawn to this great age. Patience, temperance, nay, abstinence, are already yours—in short, you want to be corrected of nothing but too much piety, too much rigour towards yourself, and too much sensibility for others. Is not it possible to serve mankind, without feeling too great pity?—Perhaps, I am

a little too much hardened—I am grown too little alarmed for the health of my friends, from being become far more indifferent to life—I look to the nearness of my end, as a delivery from spectacles of woe. We have even amongst us monsters more criminal, in speculation at least, than the French—They had cause to wish for correction of a bad government, though, till *taught* to dislike it, three-fourths of the country, I maintain, adored theirs. We have the perfectest ever yet devised—but if to your numerous readings of little pamphlets you would add one more, called *Village-politics*, infinitely superior to any thing on the subject, clearer, better stated, and comprehending the whole mass of matter in the shortest compass, you will be more mistress of the subject than any man in England. I know who wrote it, but will not tell you, because you did not tell me.

Your most faithful humble servant and friend.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, March 23, 1793.

I SHALL certainly not leave off taunting your virtues, my excellent friend, for I find it sometimes makes you correct them. I scolded you for your modesty in not acquainting me with your *Village-politics* even after they were published; and you have already conquered that unfriendly delicacy, and announced another piece of which you are in labour. Still I see there wanted your ghostly father, the bishop of London, to enjoin you to be *quite* shameless and avow your natural child. I do approve his doctrine: calling it by your own name will make its fortune. If like Rousseau, you had left your babe among the *enfants trouvés*, it might never be heard of more than his poor issue have been; for I can but observe that the French patriots, who have made such a fuss with his ashes, have not taken the smallest pains to attempt to discover his real progeny, which might not have been impossible by collating dates and circumstances.

I am proud of having imitated you at a great distance, and been persuaded, much against my will and practice, to let my name be put to the second subscription for the poor French

clergy, as it was thought it might tend to animate that consumptive contribution.

I am impatient for your pamphlet, not only as being yours, but hoping it will invigorate horror against French atheism, which I am grieved to say did not by any means make due impression. I did very early apply to *your confessor*, to beg he would enjoin his clergy to denounce that shocking impiety—I could almost recommend to you to add a slight postscript on the massacre of that wretch *Manuel*. I do not love such insects, as we are, dispensing *judgments*—yet if the punishment of that just victim might startle such profane criminals, it might be charity to suggest the hint to them.

24th.

I WAS interrupted, and could not finish my letter in a breath, as I meant the moment I had received yours, from eagerness to thank you for the notice of your *publication*. I wish you had added the name of your man-midwife the printer; but I trust to seeing you stand in a black and white sheet, the newspaper. Mrs. Boscawen was so kind as to call on me the same day with the same information from your letter to her—but in hers were some words on the late bankruptcies, more than were in mine, that alarm us, and that, though not explicit, look as if you yourself have suffered by those failures. You have such a friendly and feeling heart, that it is impossible to discern whether any grief is not rather on account of others than on your own. Pray be confidential enough to tell me; for *I* have not such universal charity, as to lament the loss of others as I should yours.

I must modify the massacre of Manuel: he has been a good deal stabbed, but will, they say, recover. Perhaps it is better that some of those assassins should live to acknowledge, that “Do not to others what you would not have done to you” is not so silly a maxim, as most of the precepts of morality and justice have lately been deemed by *philosophers and legislators*—titles self-assumed by men who have abolished all other titles; and who have disgraced and debased the former denomination, and under the latter have enjoined triple perjuries, and, at last, cannot fix on any code which should exact more forswearing. I own I am pleased that that ruffian pedant Condorcet’s new

constitution was too clumsy and unwieldy to go down the throats of those who have swallowed every thing else. I did but just cast my eyes on the beginning and end, and was so lucky as to observe the hypocrite's contradiction: he sets out with declaration of equality, and winds up with security of property. That is, we will plunder every body, and then entail the spoils on ourselves and our (*wrong*) heirs.

Well! that bloody chaos seems recoiling on themselves! It looks as if civil war was bursting out in many provinces, and will precipitate approaching famine.—When, till *now*, could one make such a reflection without horror to one's self?—But, alas! have not the French brought it to the question, whether Europe or France should be laid desolate? Religion, morality, justice, have been stabbed, torn up by the roots: every right has been trampled under foot. Marriage has been profaned and undermined by law; and no wonder, that, amidst such excesses, the poor arts have shared in the common ruin!—And who have been the perpetrators of, or advocates for, such universal devastation? Philosophers, geometricians, astronomers—a Condorcet, a Baillie, a Bishop of Autun,¹ and a doctor Priestley, and the last the worst. The French had seen grievances, crying grievances! yet not under the good late king. But what

¹ The only survivor of these busy actors in those stirring times is Charles Maurice Talleyrand de Perigord, bishop of Autun, now prince Talleyrand. In 1789, the bishop of Autun was returned by the clergy of his diocese as deputy to the states-general. In 1792, the citizen Talleyrand visited this country on a secret mission, which was, undoubtedly, to open a communication between the disaffected in this country and the French republican government; but failing, and being ordered to quit the country, he foresaw the storm which was threatening him at home, and fled to America. In 1794, a decree of perpetual banishment was passed against him, which was annulled in the September of the following year. He was minister for Foreign Affairs under the directors of the consular government. In 1807, the prince of Benevento, (for he had been invested with that principality,) was unexpectedly deprived of his ministry, but raised to the lucrative dignity of vice grand elector. He was engaged in the restoration of the Bourbons; by whom, on the 12th May 1814, he was restored to his ministerial functions. On the 4th June 1814, he was created a peer of France, by the title of prince de Talleyrand. But he calls for a volume, rather than a note. We will conclude, therefore, with one observation by him, which is highly characteristic. When called upon to swear fidelity to the present constitution of France, he merely observed, "Certainly, it is the tenth." [Ed.]

calamities or dangers threatened or had fallen on Priestley,² but want of papal power, like his predecessor Calvin? If you say his house was burnt—but did he intend the fire should blaze on that side of the street? *Your* charity may believe him innocent—but your understanding does not. Well! I am glad to hear he is going to America; I hope he will not bring back scalping, even to that national assembly of which he was proud of being elected a member! I doubt if Cartouche would have thought it an honour.

It was stuck up in Lloyd's coffee-house lately, that the duke of Orleans was named *Chef de la Republique*. I thought it should be *Chef de la Lie publique*.

For the best and most comfortable part of your letter I have not thanked you yet, my dear friend; I mean the prospect of seeing you next month, and thank the zodiac, next month is very near. I must now for my own sake, as well as yours, hope that your health will continue to improve, as it is the condition of the bond—A pleasant word, that *continue*; it implies you have been mending.

Your postscript said you had been telling me a lie—So have I; for, on reading your letter again, I find you have named your *accoucheur* Cadell. I do not wonder he has been slow. I was told lately, that he has said that the public is so totally engrossed by politics (and many pieces of that sort I conclude come from his press), that the receipts of his shop, which used to be fifteen thousand a year, have this year decreased two-thirds.—So the French par bricole have destroyed *our* literature too.

Adieu! I long to see both you and your pamphlet, and am
Most cordially yours.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, June 13, 1793.

I THANK you much for all your information—some parts made me smile:—yet, if what you heard of * * * * proves true, I rather think it deplorable! How can love of money, or the still

² He left this country for America in 1794, and died at Northumberland, in Pennsylvania, on the 6th February 1804. [Ed.]

vainer of all vanities, ambition of wearing a high but most insignificant office, which even poor lord * * * * * could execute, tempt a very old man, who loves his ease and his own way, to stoop to wait like a footman behind a chair, for hours, and in a court whence he had been cast ignominiously? I believe I have more pride than most men alive: I could be flattered by honours acquired by merit, or by some singular action of *éclat*—but for titles, ribands, offices of no business, which any body can fill, and must be given to many, I should just as soon be proud of being the top 'squire in a country village. It is only worse to have waded to distinction through dirt, like lord * * * * *.

All this shifting of scenes may, as you say, be food to the *Fronde*—*Sed defendit numerus*. It is perfectly ridiculous to use any distinction of parties but the *ins* and the *outs*: Many years ago, I thought that the wisest appellations for contending factions ever assumed, were those in the Roman empire, who called themselves *the greens and the blues*: it was so easy, when they changed sides, to slide from one colour to the other—and then a blue might plead that he had never been *true blue*, but always a *greenish blue*; and *vice versâ*.

I allow that the steadiest party man may be staggered by novel and unforeseen circumstances. The outrageous proceedings of the French republicans have wounded the cause of liberty, and will, I fear, have shaken it for centuries; for Condorcet and such fiends are worse than the imperial and royal dividers of Poland.—But I do not see why detestation of anarchy and assassination must immediately make one fall in love with garters and seals.

I am sitting by the fire, as I have done ever since I came hither; and since I do not expect warm weather in June, I am wishing for rain, or I shall not have a mouthful of hay, nor a noseful of roses.—Indeed, as I have seen several fields of hay cut, I wonder it has not brought rain, as usual. My creed is, that rain is good for hay, as I conclude every climate and its productions are suited to each other. Providence did not trouble itself about its being more expensive to us to make our hay over and over; it only took care it should not want water enough. Adieu!

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, Wednesday night, late, July 17, 1793.

I AM just come from dining with the bishop of London at Fulham, where I found lord and lady Frederick Campbell,¹ who told me of the alarm you had from hearing some screams that you thought lady A.'s, and the disorder brought upon you by flying to assist her. I do not at all wonder at your panic, and rejoice it was not founded, and that you recovered so soon. I am not going to preach against your acting so naturally:—but as you have some complaint on your breast, I must hope you will remember this accident, and be upon your guard against both sudden and rapid exertions, when you have not a tantamount call. I conclude the excessive heat we have had for twelve complete days contributed to overpower you.

It is much cooler to-day, yet still delicious; for be it known to you that I have enjoyed weather worthy of Africa, and yet without swallowing mouthfuls of musquitoes, nor expecting to hear hyænas howl in the village, nor to find scorpions in my bed. Indeed, all the way I came home, I could but gaze at the felicity of my countrymen. The road was one string of stage-coaches, loaded within and without with noisy jolly folks, and chaises and gigs that had been pleasuring in clouds of dust; every door and every window of every house was open, lights in every shop, every door with women sitting in the street, every inn crowded with jaded horses, and every ale-house full of drunken toppers; for you know the English always announce their sense of heat or cold by drinking.—Well! it was impossible not to enjoy such a scene of happiness and affluence in every village, and amongst the lowest of the people—and who are told by villainous scribblers that they are oppressed and miserable.—New streets, new towns are rising every day and every where; the earth is covered with gardens and crops of grain.

How bitter to turn from this Elysium to the Temple at Paris!

¹ Lord Frederick Campbell was third son of John, fourth duke of Argyll, and brother of lady Ailesbury. His lady, who was unfortunately burnt to death at Coomb Bank, Kent, on the 25th July 1807, was the daughter of Amos Meredith, esq. His lordship died, without issue, 8th June 1816. [Ed.]

The fiends there have now torn her son² from the queen! Can one believe that they are human beings, who 'midst all their confusions sit coolly meditating new tortures, new anguish for that poor, helpless, miserable woman, after four years of unexampled sufferings?³ Oh! if such crimes are not made a dreadful lesson, this world might become a theatre of cannibals!

I hope the checks in Bretagne are legends coined by miscreants at Paris. What can one believe? Well, I will go to bed, and try to dream of peace and plenty; and though my lawn is burnt, and my peas and beans, and roses and strawberries parched, I will bear it with patience till the harvest is got in. Saint Swithin can never hold his water for forty days, though he can do the contrary. Good night!

Yours ever.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 10, 1794.

I CERTAINLY sympathize with you on the reversed and gloomy prospect of affairs, too extensive to detail in a letter; nor indeed do I know any thing more than I collect from newspapers and public reports; and those are so overcharged with falsehoods on all sides, that, if one waits for truth to emerge, one finds new subjects to draw one's attention before firm belief can settle its trust on any. That the mass and result are bad, is certain; and though I have great alacrity in searching for comforts and grounds of new hopes, I am puzzled as much in seeking resources, as in giving present credit. Reasoning is out of the question: all calculation is baffled: nothing happens that sense or experience said was probable. I wait to see what will happen, without a guess at what is to be expected. A storm, when the parliament meets, will no doubt be attempted. How the ministers are prepared to combat it, I don't know—but I hope sufficiently—if it spreads no farther:—at least, I think

² The Dauphin, who disappeared so mysteriously during the Revolution. An individual, who claims to be so considered, has recently been submitting his pretensions to the exiled royal family of France. [Ed.]

³ She was guillotined on the 16th October 1793. [Ed.]

they have no cause to fear the new leader who is to make the attack. * * * *

I have neither seen Mr. Wilson's book nor his answerers. So far from reading political pamphlets, I hunt for any books, except modern novels, that will not bring France to my mind, or that, at least, will put it out for a time. But every fresh person one sees, revives the conversation: and excepting a long succession of fogs, nobody talks of any thing else; nor of private news do I know a tittle. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

April 27, 1794.

THIS is no plot to draw you into committing even a good deed on a Sunday, which I suppose the *literality* of your conscience would haggle about, as if the day of the week constitutes the sin, and not the nature of the crime. But you may defer your answer till to-night is become to-morrow, by the clock having struck one; and then you may do an innocent thing without any guilt, which a quarter of an hour sooner you would think abominable.—Nay, as an Irishman would say, you need not even *read* this note till the canonical hour is past.

In short, my dear madam, I gave your obliging message to lady W * * * *, who will be happy to see you on Tuesday, at one o'clock. But as her staircase is very bad, as she is in a lodging, I have proposed that this meeting, for which I have been pimping between two female saints, may be held here in my house, as I had the utmost difficulty last night in climbing her *scala santa*, and I cannot undertake it again. But if you are so good as to send me a favourable answer to-morrow, I will take care you shall find her here at the time I mentioned, with your true admirer.

TO THE REV. MR. BELOE.¹

Strawberry-hill, Dec. 2, 1794.

I do beg and beseech you, good sir, to forgive me, if I cannot possibly consent to receive the dedication² you are so kind and partial as to propose to me. I have in the most positive, and almost uncivil manner, refused a dedication or two lately. Compliments on virtues, which the persons addressed, like me, seldom possessed, are happily exploded and laughed out of use. Next to being ashamed of having good qualities bestowed on me to which I should have no title, it would hurt me to be praised on my erudition, which is most superficial; and on my trifling writings, all of which turn on most trifling subjects. They amused me while writing them; may have amused a few persons; but have nothing solid enough to preserve them from being forgotten with other things of as light a nature. I would not have your judgment called in question hereafter, if somebody reading your Aulus Gellius should ask, “What were those writings of lord O. which Mr. Beloe so much commends? Was lord O. more than one of the *mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease?*” Into that class I must sink—and I had rather do so imperceptibly, than be plunged down to it by the interposition of the hand of a friend, who could not gainsay the sentence.

For your own sake, my good sir, as well as in pity to my feelings, who am sore at your offering what I cannot accept, restrain the address to a mere inscription. You are allowed to be an excellent translator of classic authors—how unclassic would a dedication in the old-fashioned manner appear! If you had published a new edition of Herodotus or Aulus Gellius, would you have ventured to prefix a Greek or Latin dedication to some modern lord with a Gothic title?

¹ The rev. W. Beloe, formerly one of the librarians of the British Museum, author of several translations, of the “Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books,” a work which contains much curious information, and of another work, which has been severely censured, “The Sexagenarian; or Recollections of a Literary Life.” [Ed.]

² Of a translation of Aulus Gellius, by Mr. Beloe. [Or.]

Still less, had those addresses been in vogue at Rome, would any Roman author have inscribed his work to Marcus, the incompetent son of Cicero, and told the unfortunate offspring of so great a man, *of his high birth and declension of ambition?* which would have excited a laugh on poor Marcus, who, whatever may have been said of him, had more sense than to leave proofs to the public of his extreme inferiority to his father.

I am, sir, &c. &c.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Saturday night, Jan. 24, 1795.

MY BEST MADAM,

I will never more complain of your silence, for I am perfectly convinced that you have no idle, no unemployed moments. Your indefatigable benevolence is incessantly occupied in good works; and your head and your heart make the utmost use of the excellent qualities of both. You have given proofs of the talents of one, and you certainly do not wrap the still more precious talent of the other in a napkin. Thank you a thousand times for your most ingenious plan¹—may great success reward you!

I sent one instantly to the duchess of Gloucester, whose piety and zeal imitate yours at a distance; but she says she cannot afford to subscribe just at this severe moment, when the poor so much want her assistance—but she will on the thaw, and should have been flattered by receiving a plan from yourself. I sent another to lord H * * who, I trust, will show it to a much greater lady; and I repeated some of the facts you told me of the foul fiends, and their anti-*More* activity. I sent to Mr. White for half a dozen more of your plans, and will distribute them wherever I have hopes of their taking root and blossoming.—To-morrow I will send him my subscription;² and I flatter myself you will not think it a breach of Sunday, nor will I make this long, that I may not widen that fracture.—Good night!

¹ The Cheap Repository for books, at this time set on foot. [Or.]

² To the fund for promoting the printing and dispersion of the works sold at the Cheap Repository. [Or.]

How calm and comfortable must your slumbers be on the pillow of every day's good deeds !

Monday.

Yesterday was dark as midnight.—Oh ! that it may be the darkest day in all respects that we shall see !—But these are themes too voluminous and dismal for a letter, and which your zeal tells me you feel too intensely for me to increase, when you are doing all in your power to counteract them.

One of my grievances is, that the sanguinary inhumanity of the times has almost poisoned one's compassion, and makes one abhor so many thousands of our own species, and rejoice when they suffer for their crimes. I could feel no pity on reading the account of the death of Condorcet (if true, though I doubt it). He was one of the greatest monsters exhibited by history ; and is said to have poisoned himself from famine and fear of the guillotine—and would be a new instance of what I suggested to you for a tract, to show, that though we must not assume a pretension to judging of Divine judgments, yet we may believe that the economy of Providence has so disposed causes and consequences, that such villains as Danton, Robespierre, the duke of Orleans, &c. &c. &c. do but dig pits for themselves.—I will check myself, or I shall wander into the sad events of the last five years—down to the rage of party that has sacrificed Holland ! What a fund for reflection and prophetic apprehension ! May we have as much wisdom and courage to stem our malevolent enemies, as it is plain, to our lasting honour, we have had charity to the French emigrants, and have bounty for the poor who are suffering in this dreadful season !

Adieu, thou excellent woman ! thou reverse of that hyæna in petticoats, Mrs. * * * *, who to this day discharges her ink and gall on Maria Antoinette, whose unparalleled sufferings have not yet stanch'd that Alecto's blazing ferocity. Adieu ! adieu !

Yours from my heart.

P.S. I have subscribed five guineas at Mr. White's to your plan.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 13, 1795.

I RECEIVED your letter and packet of lays and virelays,¹ and heartily wish they may fall in bad ground, and produce a hundred thousand fold, as I doubt is necessary. How I admire the activity of your zeal and perseverance! Should a new church ever be built, I hope in a side chapel there will be an altar dedicated to St. Hannah, Virgin and Martyr; and that your pen, worn to the bone, will be enclosed in a golden reliquaire, and preserved on the shrine.

These few words I have been forced to dictate, having had the gout in my right hand above this fortnight; but I trust it is going off.

The duchess² was much pleased with your writing to her, and ordered me to thank you. Your friend lady W * * * * * is in town, and looks very well. Adieu, best of women!

Yours most cordially.

TO WILLIAM ROSCOE, Esq.

Berkeley-square, April 4, 1795.

To judge of my satisfaction and gratitude on receiving the very acceptable present of your book,¹ sir, you should have known my extreme impatience for it from the instant Mr. Edwards had kindly favoured me with the first chapters. You may consequently conceive the mortification I felt at not being able to thank you immediately both for the volume and the obliging letter that accompanied it, by my right arm and hand being swelled and rendered quite immoveable and useless, of which you will perceive the remains if you can read these lines

¹ Ballads, stories, tracts, &c., written by Mrs. H. More for the Cheap Repository. [Or.]

² Her royal highness the duchess of Gloucester. [Or.]

¹ The life of Lorenzo de Medici. [Or.]

which I am forcing myself to write, not without pain, the first moment I have power to hold a pen; and it will cost me some time, I believe, before I can finish my whole letter, earnest as I am, sir, to give a loose to my gratitude.

If you ever had the pleasure of reading such a delightful book as your own, imagine, sir, what a comfort it must be to receive such an anodyne in the midst of a fit of the gout that has already lasted above nine weeks, and which at first I thought might carry me to Lorenzo de Medici before he should come to me!

The complete volume has more than answered the expectations which the sample had raised. The Grecian simplicity of the style is preserved throughout; the same judicious candour reigns in every page; and without allowing yourself that liberty of indulging your own bias towards good or against criminal characters, which over-rigid critics prohibit, your artful candour compels your readers to think with you, without seeming to take a part yourself. You have shown from his own virtues, abilities, and heroic spirit, why Lorenzo deserved to have Mr. Roscoe for his biographer.—And since you have been so, sir (for he was not completely known before, at least not out of Italy), I shall be extremely mistaken if he is not henceforth allowed to be, in various lights, one of the most excellent and greatest men with whom we are well acquainted, especially if we reflect on the shortness of his life and the narrow sphere in which he had to act. Perhaps I ought to blame my own ignorance, that I did not know Lorenzo as a beautiful poet: I confess I did not. Now I do, I own, I admire some of his sonnets more than several—yes, even of Petrarch; for Lorenzo's are frequently more clear, less *alembiqués*, and not inharmonious as Petrarch's often are, from being too crowded with words, for which room is made by numerous elisions, which prevent the softening alternacy of vowels and consonants. That thicket of words was occasioned by the embarrassing nature of the sonnet—a form of composition I do not love, and which is almost intolerable in any language but Italian, which furnishes such a profusion of rhymes. To our tongue the sonnet is mortal, and the parent of insipidity. The imitation in some degree of it was extremely noxious to a true poet, our Spenser; and he was the more injudicious by lengthening his stanza in a language so barren of rhymes as ours, and in which several words, whose terminations

are of similar sounds, are so rugged, uncouth, and unmusical. The consequence was, that many lines which he forced into the service to complete the quota of his stanza are unmeaning, or silly, or tending to weaken the thought he would express.

Well, sir—but if you have led me to admire the compositions of Lorenzo, you have made me intimate with another poet, of whom I had never heard, nor had the least suspicion, and who, though writing in a less harmonious language than Italian, outshines an able master of that country, as may be estimated by the fairest of all comparisons, which is when one of each nation versifies the same ideas and thoughts.

That novel poet I boldly pronounce is Mr. Roscoe. Several of his translations of Lorenzo are superior to the originals, and the verses more poetic—nor am I bribed to give this opinion by the present of your book, nor by any partiality, nor by the surprise of finding so pure a writer of history as able a poet. Some good judges, to whom I have shown your translations, entirely agree with me.

I will name one most competent judge, Mr. Hoole, so admirable a poet himself, and such a critic in Italian, as he has proved by a translation of Ariosto.

That I am not flattering you, sir, I will demonstrate; for I am not satisfied with one essential line in your version of the most beautiful, I think, of all Lorenzo's stanzas—it is his description of jealousy, in page 268, equal, in my humble opinion, to Dryden's delineations of the passions, and the last line of which is

Mai dorme, ed ostinata a se sol crede.

The thought to me is quite new, and your translation I own does not come up to it.—Mr. Hoole² and I hammered at it, but could not content ourselves.—Perhaps by altering your last couplet you may enclose the whole sense, and make it equal to the preceding six.

I will not ask your pardon, sir, for taking so much liberty with you. You have displayed so much candour and so much modesty, and are so free from pretensions, that I am confident

² John Hoole, esq., the friend of Johnson, and translator of Tasso. He died at Dorking, 2d August 1803. [Ed.]

you will allow that truth is the sole ingredient that ought to compose deserved incense; and if ever commendation was sincere, no praise ever flowed with purer veracity than all I have said does from the heart of, sir,

Your infinitely obliged humble servant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawb. July 2, 1795.

I WILL write a word to you, though I have scarce time to write one, to thank you for your great kindness about the soldier, who shall get a substitute if he can.

As you are, or have been in town, your daughter will have told you what a bustle I am in, preparing—not to resist, but to receive an invasion of royalties to-morrow—and cannot even escape them like admiral Cornwallis, though seeming to make a semblance; for I am to wear a sword, and have appointed two aides-de-camp, my nephews, George and Horace C * * * *. If I *fall*, as ten to one but I do, to be sure it will be a superb tumble, at the feet of a queen and eight daughters of kings; for, besides the six princesses, I am to have the duchess of York and the princess of Orange! Woe is me, at 78, and with scarce a hand and foot to my back! Adieu!

Yours, &c. a poor old remnant.

TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry-hill, July 7, 1795.

I AM not dead of fatigue with my royal visitors, as I expected to be, though I was on my poor lame feet three whole hours. Your daughter, who kindly assisted me in doing the honours, will tell you the particulars, and how prosperously I succeeded. The queen was uncommonly condescending and gracious, and deigned to drink my health when I presented her with the last glass, and to thank me for all my attentions.—Indeed, my

memory *de vieille cour* was but once in default. As I had been assured that her Majesty would be attended by her chamberlain, yet was not, I had no glove ready when I received her at the step of her coach: yet she honoured me with her hand to lead her up stairs; nor did I recollect my omission when I led her down again. Still, though gloveless, I did not squeeze the royal hand, as vice-chamberlain Smith did to queen Mary.¹

You will have stared, as I did, at the elector of Hanover deserting his ally the king of Great Britain, and making peace with the monsters. But Mr. F * * *, whom I saw at my sister's on Sunday, laughs at the article in the newspapers, and says it is not an unknown practice for stock-jobbers to hire an emissary at the rate of 500*l.* and dispatch him to Francfort, whence he brings forged attestations of some marvellous political event, and spreads it on 'Change, which produces such a fluctuation in the stocks, as amply overpays the expense of his mission.

This was all I learnt in the single night I was in town. I have not read the new French constitution, which seems longer than probably its reign will be. The five sovereigns will, I suppose, be the first guillotined. Adieu!

Yours ever.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, August 29, 1796.

You are not only the most beneficent, but the most benevolent of human beings. Not content with being a perfect saint yourself, which (forgive me for saying) does not always imply prodigious compassion for others; not satisfied with being the most disinterested, nay, the reverse of all patriots, for you sacrifice your very slender fortune, not to improve it, but to keep the poor honest, instead of corrupting them; and you write politics

¹ It is said that queen Mary asked some of her attendant ladies what a squeeze of the hand was supposed to intimate?—They said, "Love."—"Then," said the queen, "my vice-chamberlain must be violently in love with me, for he always squeezes my hand."

Marshal Conway died three days after the date of this letter. [Or.]

as simply, intelligibly, and unartfully, not as cunningly as you can to mislead.—Well, with all these giant virtues, you can find room and time in your heart and occupations for harbouring and exercising what these monkeys of pretensions, the French, invented, and called *les petites morales*, which were to supply society with filigrain duties, in the room of all virtues, which they abolished on their road to the adoption of philosophy and atheism—Yes, though for ever busied in exercising services and charities for individuals, or for whole bodies of people, you do not leave a cranny empty into which you can slip a kindness. Your inquiry after me to miss B * * * is so friendly, that I cannot trust solely to her thanking you for your letter, as I am sure she will, having sent it to her as she is bathing in the sea at Bognor rocks : but I must with infinite gratitude give you a brief account of myself—a very poor one, indeed, must I give. Condemned as a cripple to my couch for the rest of my days I doubt I am. 'Though perfectly healed, and even without a scar, my leg is so weakened that I have not recovered the least use of it, nor can move cross my chamber unless lifted up and held by two servants. This constitutes me totally a prisoner— But why should not I be so? What business had I to live to the brink of seventy-nine? And why should one litter the world at that age? Then I thank God, I have vast blessings; I have preserved my eyes, ears, and teeth; I have no pain left; and I would bet with any dormouse that it cannot outsleep me.—And when one can afford to pay for every relief, comfort, or assistance, that can be procured at four-score, dares one complain? Must not one reflect on the thousands of old poor, who are suffering martyrdom, and have none of those alleviations?—O my good friend, I must consider myself as at my best; for if I drag on a little longer, can I expect to remain even so tolerably. Nay, does the world present a pleasing scene? Are not the devils escaped out of the swine, and overrunning the earth headlong? What a theme for meditation, that the excellent humane Louis Seize should have been prevented from saving himself by that monster Drouet, and that that execrable wretch should be saved even by those, some of whom one may suppose he meditated to massacre; for at what does a Frenchman stop?—But I will quit this shocking subject, and for another reason, too: I omitted one of my losses, almost the use of my fingers: they are so lame that I cannot write a dozen lines legibly, but

am forced to have recourse to my secretary.—I will only reply by a word or two to a question you seem to ask; how I like *****? I do not care to say how little.—Alas! she has reversed experience, which I have long thought reverses its own utility by coming at the wrong end of our life when we do not want it. This author knew the world and penetrated characters before she stepped over the threshold; and now she has seen so much of it she has little or no insight at all—perhaps she apprehended having seen too much—and kept the bags of foul air that she brought from the Cave of Tempests too closely tied.

Adieu, thou who mightest be one of the cleverest of women if thou didst not prefer being *one* of the best! And when I say *one* of the best, I have not engaged my vote for the second.

Yours most gratefully.

TO MR. GOUGH.

Berkeley-square, Dec. 5, 1796.

DEAR SIR,

Being struck with the extreme cold of last week, it has brought a violent gouty inflammation into one of my legs, and I was forced to be instantly brought to town very ill. As soon as I was a little recovered, I found here your most magnificent present of the second volume of Sepulchral Monuments, the most splendid work I ever saw, and which I congratulate myself on having lived long enough to see. Indeed I congratulate my country on its appearance exactly at so illustrious a moment, when the patriotism and zeal of London have exhibited so astonishing marks of their opulence and attachment to the constitution, by a voluntary subscription of seventeen millions of money in three days.¹ Your book, sir, appearing at that very instant, will be a monument of a fact so unexampled in history; the treasure of fine prints with which it is stowed, well becomes such a production and such a work, the expense of which becomes it,

¹ On the 1st December 1796, the subscription to the Loyalty loan was opened, when eighteen millions were subscribed in fifteen hours and twenty minutes. [Ed.]

too. I am impatient to be able to sit up and examine it more, and am sure my gratitude will increase in proportion. As soon as I shall receive the complete sheets, I will have the whole work bound in the most superb manner that can be: and though, being so infirm now, and just entered into my eightieth year, I am not likely to wait on you, and thank you, I shall be happy to have an opportunity, whenever you come this way, of telling you in person how much I am charmed with so splendid a monument of British glories, and which will be so proud an ornament to the libraries of any nation.

I am, &c.

TO THE COUNTESS OF * * * *.

January 13, 1797.

You distress me infinitely by showing my idle notes, which I cannot conceive can amuse any body. My old-fashioned breeding impels me every now and then to reply to the letters you honour me with writing; but in truth very unwillingly, for I seldom can have any thing particular to say. I scarce go out of my own house, and then only to two or three very private places, where I see nobody that really knows any thing—and what I learn comes from newspapers, that collect intelligence from coffee-houses—consequently, what I neither believe nor report. At home I see only a few charitable elders, except about fourscore nephews and nieces of various ages, who are each brought to me once a year, to stare at me as the Methusalem of the family; and they can only speak of their own contemporaries, which interest no more than if they talked of their dolls, or bats and balls. Must not the result of all this, madam, make me a very entertaining correspondent?—and can such letters be worth showing?—or can I have any spirit when so old, and reduced to dictate? Oh! my good madam, dispense with me from such a task, and think how it must add to it to apprehend such letters being shown. Pray send me no more such laurels, which I desire no more than their leaves when decked with a scrap of tinsel, and stuck on twelfth-cakes that lie on the shop-boards of pastry-

cooks at Christmas. I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me, when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust.¹ Till then, pray, madam, accept the resignation of

Your ancient servant.

¹ Lord Orford died in little more than six weeks after the date of this letter. [Or.]

THE END.

Ms. A. 11-8

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